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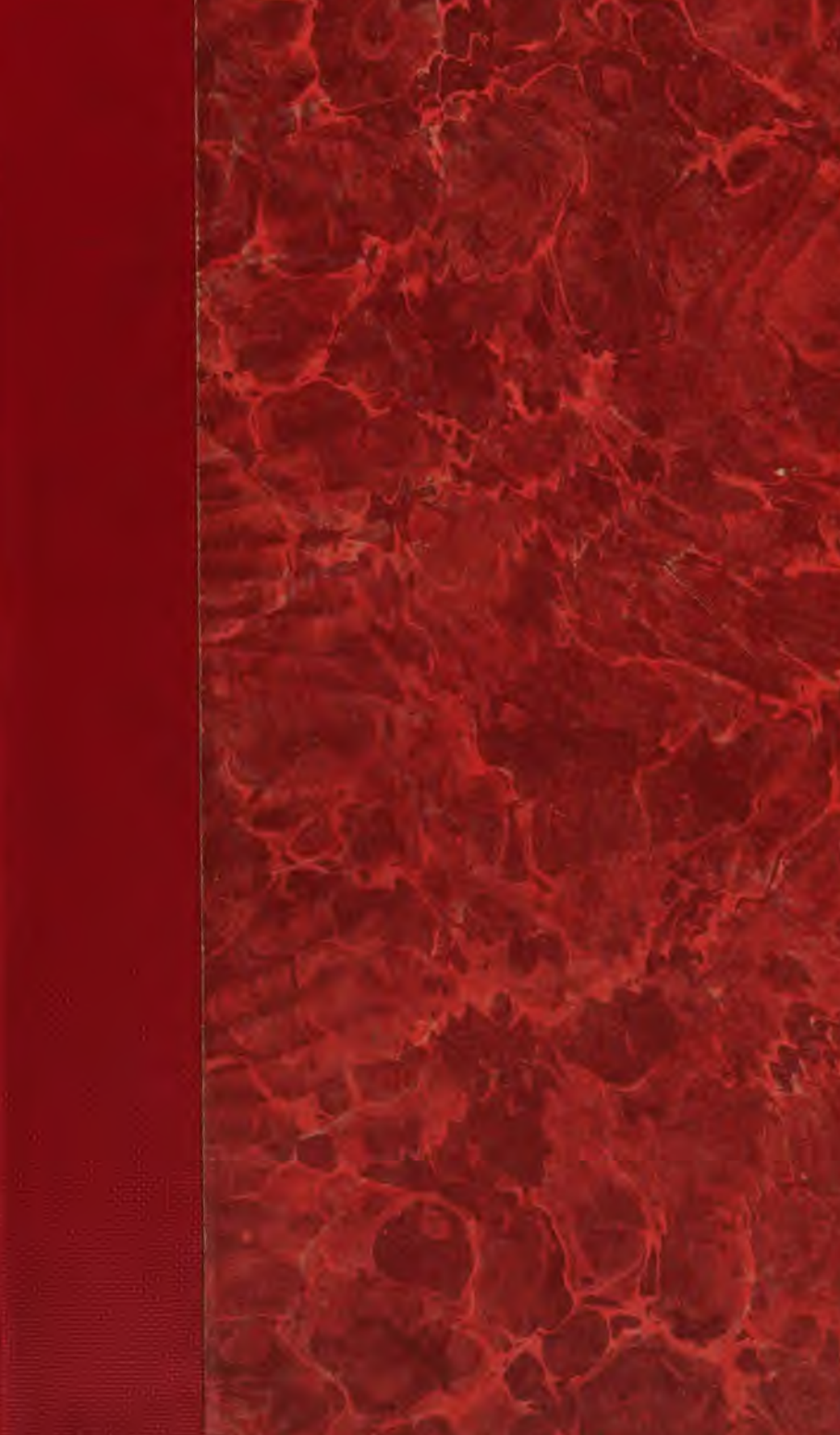
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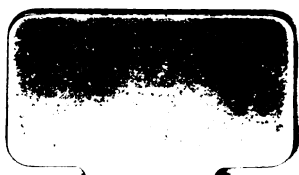
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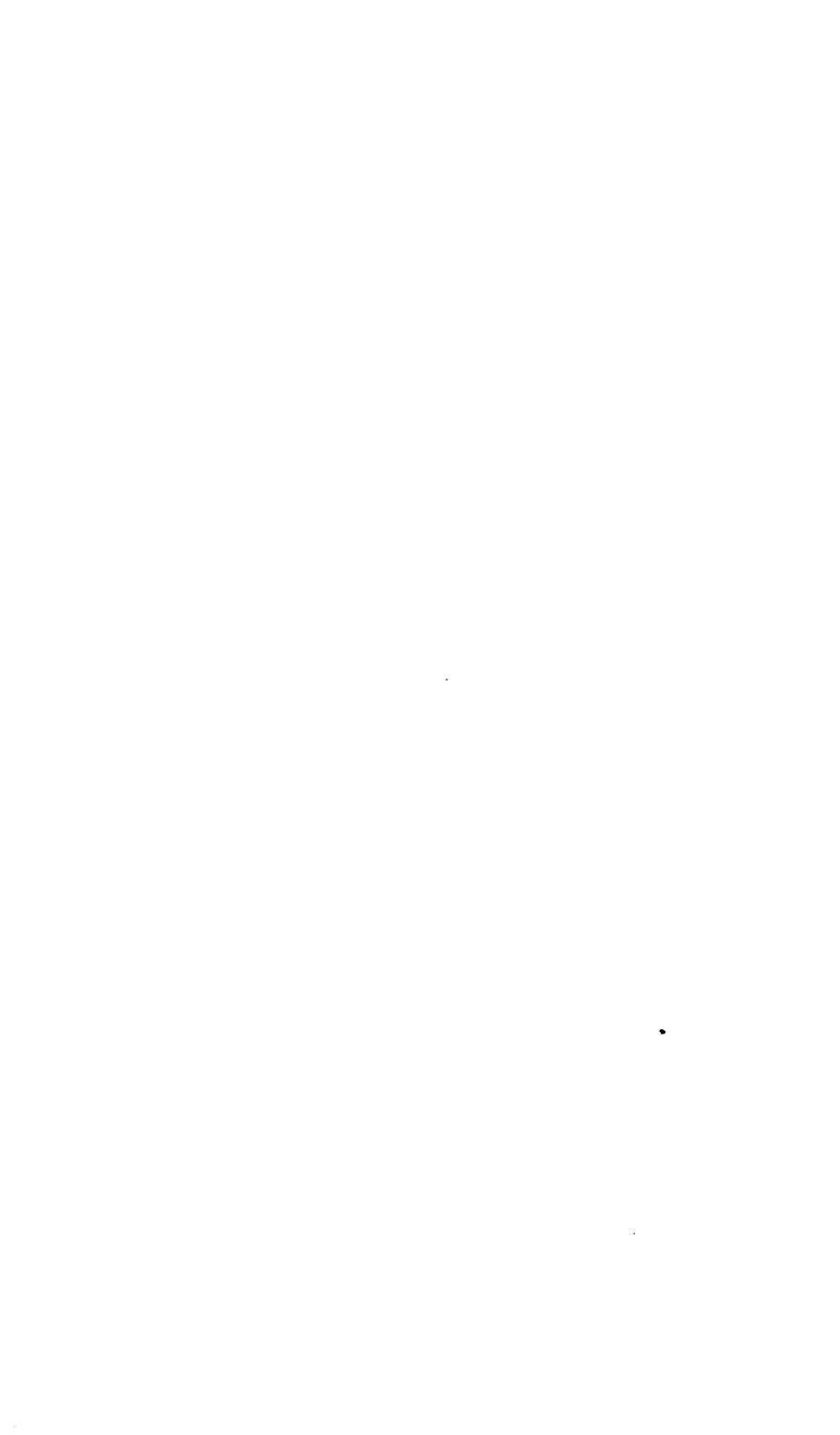
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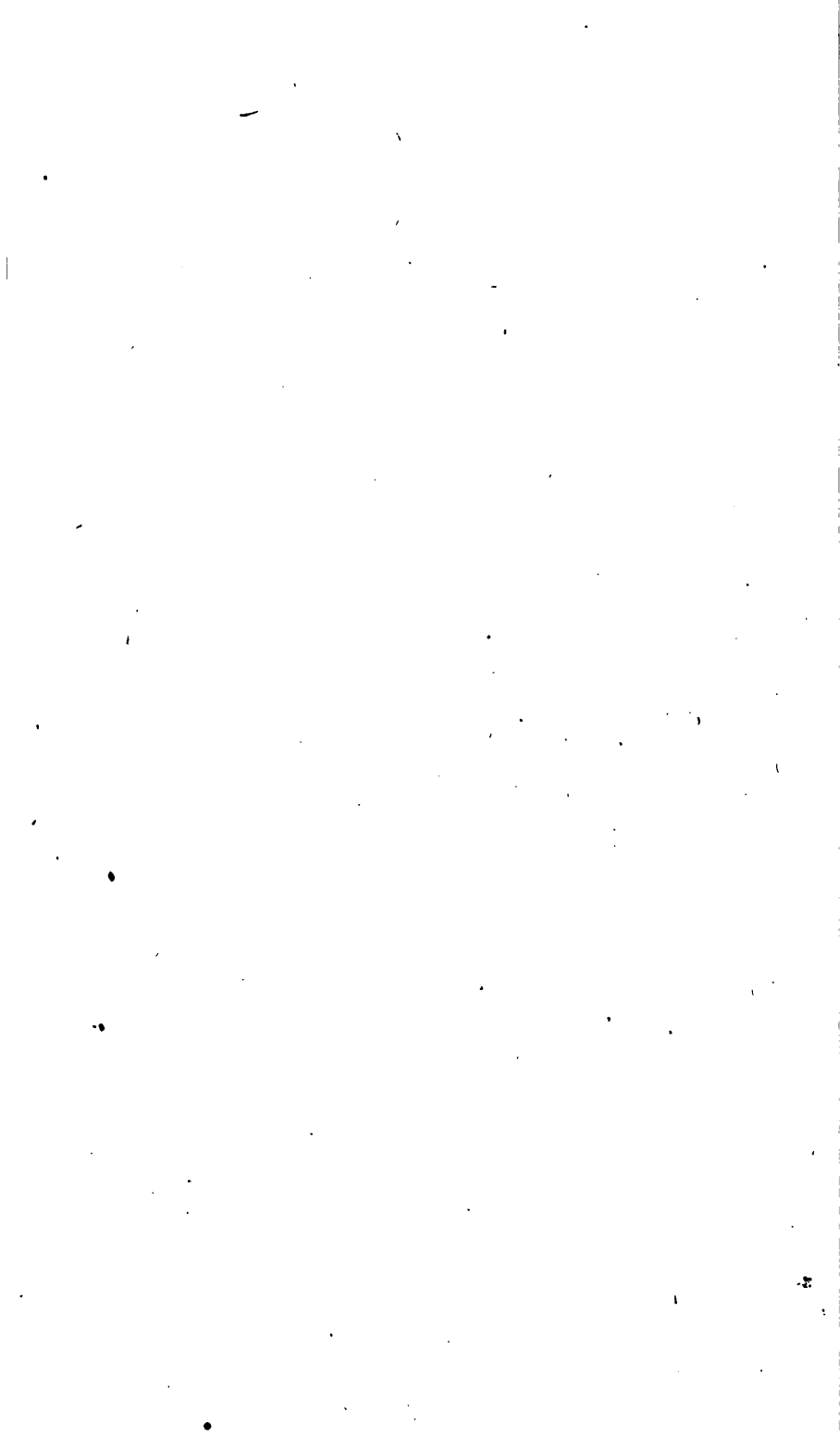




THE
ORLANDO

OF
ARIOSTO.

VOL. II.



THE
O R L A N D O

OF

A R I O S T O,

REDUCED TO XXIV BOOKS;

THE NARRATIVE CONNECTED,

AND THE

STORIES DISPOSED IN A REGULAR SERIES:

BY JOHN HOOLE,

TRANSLATOR OF THE ORIGINAL WORK
IN FORTY-SIX BOOKS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE
THIRTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

VOL. II.

B

THE ARGUMENT.

THE knights, being joined by another champion, deliver Vivian and Malagigi. Hippalca, Bradamant's maid, gives Rogero intelligence of Frontino being taken from her by Rodomont. Arrival of Rodomont and Mandricardo with Doralis. Mandricardo jousts with all the knights, and fights with Marphisa. Rogero returns to the fountain. Strange dissensions among the warriors. Malagigi, to save Richardetto, causes a demon to enter the horse of Doralis, who is carried away by him, and is followed by Mandricardo and Rodomont, who are pursued by Rogero and Marphisa. These two, joined by Gradefso, Sacripant, Rogero, and Marphisa, attack the camp of Charles with great slaughter. Discord is sent again to the Pagans: the quarrels among the knights to be decided by single combat: order of the combats settled by lot. Fresh dissensions. Brunello carried off by Marphisa. The pretensions of Rodomont and Mandricardo to Doralis referred to the choice of the lady. Departure of Rodomont from the camp.

THE
THIRTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

SOON as the knight unknown, advancing, view'd
Where each brave chief prepar'd for combat
stood,

Eager he turn'd to prove in martial deed
How far their valour with their looks agreed.

Is there amongst you one who dares (he cries) 5
With me in single fight dispute the prize,
With spear or sword in rough encounter meet,
Till one shall fall, while one retains his feat?

That man were I (thus Aldiger reply'd)
With thee the sword to wield, the spear to guide: 10
But, as thyself shall see, far other task
Bids us refuse, what courage bids thee ask;
A task that scarce permits these few short words,
Much less the time to run at tilt affords.

Behold where station'd here, we three prepare 15

At east six hundred men in arms to dare,

That by our love and valour may be freed

Two wretched friends, to cruel bonds decreed.

He said; and to the brave unknown reveal'd

The cause that drew them to the dangerous field. 20

Well hast thou urg'd such reasons as suffice

For just excuse (the stranger thus replies);

And sure three knights you seem, whose dauntless
worth

Scarce meets its rival through the spacious earth.

With you I fought but now to run the course 25

On equal terms, for proof of either's force :

Yet since on others I shall see your might

Far better try'd—I claim no more the fight;

But this I claim—my arms with yours to wield,

With yours to join this helmet, lance, and shield; 30

And trust to prove, when on your side I stand,

Not undeserving of so brave a band.

Some here may wish to learn the warrior's name,

Who thus, a fearless candidate for fame,

Would with Rogero and his fellows meet 35

The dreadful hazards of their hardy feat.

SHE then (no longer HE this champion call)

Was bold Marphisa, from whose hand his fall

Zerbino

Zerbino suffer'd, sworn by her to guard
Gabrina foul, for every ill prepar'd. 40

The good Rogero, and each noble lord
Of Clarmont's house, receiv'd with one accord
The proffer'd aid of her, whom all esteem'd
Of manly sex, as by her dress she seem'd.

Not long they stay'd, ere Aldiger beheld, 45
And show'd his friends, at distance on the field,
A banner rais'd, that to the breezes flow'd,
And round the banner throng'd the Moorish crowd,
Where, borne on two low steeds, were captive seen
The wretched brethren, with dejected mien, 50
Who slowly rode, in shameful shackles bound,
With lances, swords, and bows encompass'd round.

Then thus Marphisa—Wherefore such delay,
When these are present, to begin the fray?
Rogero answer'd—Of th' invited train 55
To crown the banquet, many guests remain:
Soon will the rest attend—While thus he said,
His bold compeers Maganza's troop survey'd,
With groaning mules in loaded wains, that drew
Vast heaps of gold and vests of various hue. 60
Now Bertolagi (cause of every grief)
Was heard conferring with the Moorish chief.

Not Buovo's son *, nor he † of Amon's strain,
 The traitor present, could their wrath contain :
 At once his spear in rest each warrior took ; 65
 And each, at once, the proud Maganzan struck :
 One through his helm the deadly wound impress'd ;
 One drove the thrilling weapon through his breast,
 At this Marphisa with Rogero fir'd,
 No other signal for th' attack requir'd ; 70
 And ere her spear she broke, the martial maid
 Low on the ground three warriors breathless laid.
 The other impious chief was worthy found
 From fierce Rogero's spear to meet his wound :
 He fell ; and, by the same dire weapon slain, 75
 Two more were sent to Death's relentless reign.
 An error now amidst th' assail'd was bred,
 That wide and wider to their ruin spread :
 Those of Maganza deem'd themselves betray'd
 By the fierce Saracens ; the Moors, dismay'd 80
 By frequent wounds and deaths on every hand,
 With treacherous murder charg'd Maganza's band ;
 Till fell reproach to mutual carnage rose,
 With spears in rest, drawn swords, and bended bows.
 If e'er you saw, or e'er have heard the tale, 85
 How, when fierce factions in the hive prevail,

* ALDIGER.

† RICHARDETTO.

As to their standard in the fields of air,
 The buzzing legions for the fight prepare,
 Amidst them oft the hungry swallow pours,
 Rends, kills, or scatters, and whole troops devours: 90
 So think Marphisa, so Rogero rag'd;
 Alike by turns each dastard troop engag'd.
 Rinaldo's brother*, to the dauntless mind
 That fits a warrior, mighty prowess join'd;
 And now the hatred he Maganza bore, 95
 Gave twofold vigour to his wonted power:
 This fir'd the base-born son † of Buovo's bed,
 Who, like a lion, his resentment fed.
 What soul but here had caught the martial ire?
 What breast but here had glow'd with Hector's fire?
 Here, with Marphisa and Rogero join'd, 101
 The choice, the flower of all the warrior kind?
 Marphisa, as she fought, oft turn'd her eyes,
 And view'd her comrades' deeds with vast surprise;
 She prais'd them all; but good Rogero rais'd 105
 Her wonder most, him o'er mankind she prais'd:
 Sometimes she deem'd that Mars had from above
 Left his fifth heaven, the powers of men to prove.
 She mark'd his dreadful sword, that never fail'd,
 Against whose edge no temper'd steel avail'd; 110

* RICHARDETTO.

† ALDIGER.

The helm and cuirass strong it pierces through,
It cleaves the rider to the seat in two,
And sends, divided, in a crimson tide,
The trunk in equal parts on either side ;
Nor deaden'd there its dreadful fury stays, 115
But with his wretched lord the courser slays.

Alike appear'd Marphisa's martial ire,
Her foes all frozen, and herself all fire !
While she no less attracts Rogero's gaze,
Than he before might claim the virgin's praise: 120
And, as she deem'd him Mars, so, had he known
His partner's sex, to equal wonder won
Of her great deeds, he sure had styl'd the fair
The dread Bellona, patroness of war !
Caught each from each, their kindling ardour rose, 125
Dire emulation for their wretched foes !
Full soon the might of these resistless four
Dispers'd each camp, and broke their strongest power.
Who hop'd to 'scape, his limbs from armour freed,
And stript, in lighter vesture urg'd his speed. 130
Happy the man whose courser swiftest flies ;
No common pace his safety now supplies :
While he, who wants a steed, laments the harms
That more on foot attend the trade of arms,

There

There fled Maganza's force, here fled the Moor,
 Those left the prisoners, these their wealthy store. 136
 With joyful looks, and with exulting mind,
 The noble kinsmen hasten'd to unbind
 Vivian and Malagigi, whilst a train
 Bore heaps of treasure from the loaded wain; 140
 Vases of silver wrought (the victor's prize)
 And female vests that flam'd with costly dyes;
 Viands, on which their hunger might be fed,
 With generous wines, and all-sustaining bread.

Each helm unlac'd, the noble warrior-maid 145
 Appear'd confest: her golden locks display'd
 Her hidden sex, and on her lovely face
 Bright shone the charms that female features grace.
 With rapture, all the generous virgin view'd,
 And now to learn her glorious name they su'd: 150
 She, with her friends to mild deportment us'd,
 Complacent heard, nor what they wish'd refus'd.
 On her, whose deeds so late their wonder rais'd,
 Each ardent knight with eye insatiate gaz'd;
 She on Rogero; him alone she heard, 155
 With him alone she stood, with him conferr'd.

But now the pages call'd her to repair
 Where, by a fountain's side, the feast to share,

In the cool shelter which a hill display'd,
Her friends repos'd beneath the grateful shade. 160
This fountain, rais'd with art, was one of four
Which Merlin made in France by magic lore;
Of purest marble was the structure bright,
With dazzling polish smooth, and milky white;
Here Merlin, to the wondering sight had brought 165
Expressive forms in rising sculpture wrought.
Thou would'st have said they seem'd in act to strive,
And breathe, and move—in all but speech alive!
These Malagigi's well-taught lips explain'd,
No past events in storied page contain'd, 170
But mighty kings and heroes yet unborn,
Whose future deeds the stately fount adorn.

Thus in discourse, the banquet of the mind,
Their hunger fled, on carpets rich reclin'd,
Beside the crystal stream at ease they lay, 175
And careless pass'd the sultry hours away;
While Malagigi and while Vivian, drest
In shining steel, kept watch to guard the rest.

Now unaccompany'd behold a dame,
With looks impatient, to the fountain came: 180
Hippalca was she call'd, from whom the hand
Of ruthless Rodomont Frontino gain'd:

She

She came, and sudden there Rogero view'd ;
But as Love's prudent envoy, well indu'd
With cautious thought, whatever chance might fall,
And prompt to change at meet occasion's call ; 186
Soon as her lady's brother she beheld,
She check'd her bridle, and her haste repell'd ;
And 'midst the warriors coldly passing by,
On young Rogero cast a stranger's eye. 190
Then Richardetto rose to meet the dame,
And ask'd her whither bound, and whence she came.
She then with heavy cheer, and eyes yet red
From many a falling tear, thus sighing said ;
But spoke so loud, that brave Rogero's ear, 195
Who stood beside, might every accent hear.

Late, at your sister's charge, o'er hill and plain
I led a generous courser by the rein,
In the swift race and fields of battle prov'd,
Frontino call'd, and much the steed she lov'd. 200
Full ten long miles I unmolested pass'd,
And hop'd secure to reach Marseilles at last ;
But vain my hopes have prov'd, since yester fun
A Pagan hand by force Frontino won ;
Nor, when he heard his noble owner's name, 205
Restor'd the courser, or allow'd the claim.

She

She said ; and scarcely thus her speech could close,
 Ere, starting from his seat, Rogero rose,
 And, turning swift to Richardetto, pray'd
 (The sole reward he ask'd for welcome aid 210
 But late bestow'd) that he alone might go,
 And with the damsel seek her daring foe,
 The haughty Saracen, whose lawless force
 Had from her guidance rest the warrior horse.
 He said ; and swiftly turning bade adieu, 215
 And with Hippalca from the rest withdrew ;
 Who, left behind, all silent with amaze,
 Scarce found a tongue his valorous acts to praise.

The king of Algiers now, and Tartar knight,
 With Doralis, the lovely cause of fight, 220
 In friendship rode ; and reach'd the verdant glade,
 Where near the fount the Christian warriors * laid, }
 With bold Marphisa, rested in the shade. }

Marphisa, at each generous knight's request,
 Had cloth'd her person in a female vest, 225
 With rich attire and costly ornament,
 By Bertolagi to Lanfusa sent.

Soon as the Tartar had Marphisa seen,
 He purpos'd from her knights the dame to win,

* MALAGIGI, VIVIAN, ALDIGER, and RICHARDETTO.

And,

And, in exchange for Doralis, bestow 230
Her youthful beauties on his rival foe;
As if the lover could such terms approve,
To sell a mistress, or transfer a love!
And sudden every chief he there beheld,
He call'd to joust, and dar'd them to the field. 235
Vivian and Malagigi, ready drest
In plate and mail, advanc'd before the rest.

Left Vivian, with a heart unus'd to fear,
With nervous vigour grasp'd a ponderous spear:
From Vivian's hand the Pagan met the stroke, 240
But he nor fell, nor bow'd beneath the shock.
The Pagan king his tougher spear impell'd,
Which broke, like ice, the plates of Vivian's shield:
Hurl'd from his seat, amid the flowery way,
Stretch'd on his side the hapless warrior lay. 245

Then Malagigi came—but ill he far'd,
He less aveng'd him, than his fortune shar'd.
The third brave brother, eager for the fight,
Before his kinsman on his courser light
Leaps clad in arms, the Saracen defies, 250
Throws up the reins, and to the trial flies.
Shiver'd in four, his spear to heaven ascends:
Firm sits the knight, nor in the saddle bends.

The

The Christian's shield oppos'd the stroke in vain,
 Nor shield nor cuirass could the force sustain: 255
 Through his white shoulder pass'd the ruthless steel,
 And wounded Aldiger began to reel;
 Then falling, on th' enamell'd turf lay spread,
 All pale his features, and his armour red.

Next Richardetto to th' encounter press'd, 260
 And coming, plac'd his ponderous lance in rest,
 But headlong on the ground he lay o'erthrown,
 His falling courser's fault, and not his own.

No knight appearing more whose venturous hand
 With Mandricardo in the joust might stand, 265
 He thus began—'Thou, damsel, art my prize,
 If in thy cause no other champion rise
 To rein the steed—thy charms revert to me,
 For so, thou know'lt, the laws of war decree.

Marphisa, raising with indignant pride 270
 Her haughty looks—Thy judgment errs (she cry'd);
 I grant the plea, nor should thy right decline,
 That I by laws of war were justly thine;
 Did I, of these thy spear to earth has thrown,
 One for my lord or for my champion own— 275
 I own no lord, to none have subject been,
 And he who wins me, from myself must win.

I wield the buckler, and the lance sustain,
And many a knight by me has prest the plain.
My arms and steed!—The fiery virgin said, 280
And, at her word, the ready squires obey'd.
Stripp'd off her flowing robe, in vesture light
She stands, with well-turn'd limbs reveal'd to fight;
Beauty and strength uniting in her frame,
All, save her face, the God of war proclaim. 285
And now with plate and mail encompass'd round,
Her sword she girts, and with an active bound
Bestrides her steed, which, govern'd by her hand,
Rears, turns, and wheels subservient to command.
Now boldly she the Pagan prince defies, 290
Wields her strong lance, and to th' encounter flies.
Penthefilea thus, in battle prov'd,
Through Trojan fields to meet Achilles mov'd.

Close to the grasp, like brittle glass, were rent
The crashing spears; but neither rider bent 295
One foot, one inch—then fir'd with generous rage,
To prove how well her daring foe could wage
A closer fight, Marphisa bar'd her sword,
And rush'd intrepid on the Tartar lord.
The Tartar, who the dame unhurt espies, 300
Blasphemes each element, and threatens the skies;

While

While she, who hop'd his shield to rend in twain,
 Accuses heaven in no less angry strain.
 Each wields the gleaming sword, while batter'd round,
 Their jointed arms like beaten anvils sound: 305
 Alike in arms of fated steel attir'd,
 Arms never more than on this day requir'd;
 So strong the helm, the cuirass, plate, and greave,
 No point could pierce them, and no edge could cleave.
 The strife had lasted till the setting light, 310
 Nor yet th' ensuing day had clos'd the fight,
 But Redoubt rush'd in, their rage to stay,
 And chide his rival for ill-tim'd delay.

If war thou seek'st (the king of Algiers cry'd)
 First let us two our late dispute decide. 315
 Then to Marphisa, with a courteous air,
 He turn'd, and show'd the regal messenger,
 And hop'd, at his request, her valour won
 Would aid the cause of king Troyano's son;
 By this 'twere better far, with generous aim, 320
 To lift to heaven the pinions of her fame,
 Than by low brawls defeat the great design,
 Against the common foe their strength to join.
 Long had Marphisa wish'd, with sword and lance,
 To prove, in equal field, the peers of France, 325
 Who

Who fought for Charles; and hence the dame
 agreed,
 To assist their sovereign at his greatest need,
 Till from the Christian powers the camp was freed.

Meanwhile Rogero, with the guiding maid,
 The rugged path, that up the hill convey'd, 330
 Pursu'd in vain, for when the vale they gain'd,
 No longer there fierce Rodomont remain'd.
 He will'd Hippalca then, without delay,
 To Mount Albano should direct her way,
 And bade her trust in him, nor trust in vain, 335
 His arm, ere long, Frontino would regain;
 To her he gave the tender lines to bear,
 Which late, at Agrismont, his anxious care
 Had penn'd to ease the dear expecting maid,
 And hither, in his breast conceal'd, convey'd. 340
 To this he added many a gentle charge,
 To speak his love, and plead his cause at large.
 All these Hippalca promis'd to retain;
 Then bade adieu, and turn'd her palfrey's rein.
 Swift on her way the trusty envoy goes, 345
 And Mount Albano sees at evening close.

Rogero, turning then, his way pursu'd,
 With anxious speed, till at the fount he view'd

The king, with Mandricardo at his side,
 And Doralis, in peace and friendship ride. 350
 When near the place, the youthful warrior drew,
 And by Frontino well his rider knew ;
 He couch'd his spear, and dar'd the Sarzan knight,
 Who ne'er till then was known to evade the fight :
 But now the wish to aid his king distress'd, 355
 The ruling passion of his soul suppress'd.

While still Rogero, from the Sarzan's hands,
 Frontino, or the instant fight, demands ;
 And he, resolv'd, to neither will accede,
 To give the battle, or restore the steed ; 360
 Lo ! Mandricardo, with indignant pride,
 New cause for contest in the field descry'd ;
 He saw Rogero on his buckler bear
 The bird that reigns o'er others prince of air.

He saw, and sudden at the sight inflam'd 365
 With dreadful wrath to view the crest he claim'd
 Usurp'd by other chiefs, and to his scorn .
 On other shields great Hector's eagle borne ;
 Stept fiercely forth, and, with a threatening cry—
 Behold, Rogero, I thy force defy ! 370
 Thou dar'st for thy device that eagle wield,
 My glorious conquest in a dreadful field.

As

As in the crackling wood, when breath inspires
 The sudden blaze, and wakes the sleeping fires ;
 So to his ear when first the challenge came, 375
 Rogero's anger burst to instant flame.

Thou think'st to o'erpower me now—(he cries
 enrag'd)

But though another has my arms engag'd,
 They soon shall win (thou to thy cost shalt see)
 From him Frontino, Hector's shield from thee. 380
 Ill fate for thee yon argent bird to bear,
 Which thou usurp'st, and I with justice wear,
 Deliver'd down to me, the rightful heir. }

'Tis thou usurp'st my right—and at the word,
 Stern Mandricardo grasp'd his dreadful sword, 385
 That sword, which once in fight Orlando drew,
 And late in madness 'midst the forest threw.

Rogero saw his foe the falchion wield,
 And dropt his spear as useless on the field.
 His sword, good Balifarda, then with haste 390
 His right hand seiz'd, his left the shield embrac'd ;
 But Rodomont between them spurr'd his steed :
 Marphisa interpos'd with equal speed.

Words follow words, and wrath new wrath supplies ;
 Now here, now there, increasing tumults rise. 395

As when, escaping from its broken shores,
 The angry stream through various channels pours,
 The peasant sees the waves the meads o'erflow,
 And trembles for his promis'd crops below ;
 While here his cares against the flood provide, 400
 Thro' other breaches bursts the sounding tide :
 Thus, while with Rodomont Rogero rag'd,
 And Mandricardo in like feuds engag'd ;
 Marphisa strove to calm each restless soul,
 No words could soothe them, and no prayers control.
 O ! yet (she cry'd) these vain debates compose, 406
 Till Agramant is freed from Christian foes.

Not one shall aid our king with readier speed
 Than I—but let him first restore the steed,
 (Rogero cry'd)—let him my words attend, 410
 Restore the courser, or himself defend.
 Here will I fall in glorious combat slain,
 Or, with Frontino, victor quit the plain.
 Then Rodomont—The first may well befall ;
 The last for other force than thine may call— 415
 Then thus pursu'd—Hear what I now protest,
 If further ill betide our king distressed,
 Yours be the blame, since here prepar'd I stand
 To act what duty and what fame demand.

Thus

Thus he—but little heedful of the word, 420
 Rogero furious grasp'd his shining sword :
 Like some wild boar with Redomont he clos'd,
 To shoulder shoulder, shield to shield oppos'd :
 Defer the combat (Mandricardo cry'd)
 Or if thou fight'st, with me thy arm be try'd. 425
 He said, and now inflam'd with deeper spite,
 Struck on the helmet of the youthful knight :
 Low to his courser's neck Rogero bent,
 Nor soon recovering rose, for swiftly sent
 By Ulien's mighty son, the thundering steel 430
 With dreadful ruin on his head-piece fell :
 Rogero's hands unclos'd with sudden pain,
 One lost the falchion, and one lost the rein ;
 The startled courser bears him o'er the land,
 And Balifarda glitters on the sand. 435

Marphisa, who with him in arms had stood
 Indignant now th' unequal conflict view'd,
 On Mandricardo turning swift, she sped
 Her unsheath'd falchion at the Tartar's head.
 The king of Algiers on Rogero drives— 440
 Frontino's won, unless some aid arrives.
 But Richardetto and bold Vivian bring
 Their friendly aid : while 'twixt the knight and king

That, spurs his steed, and this, with ready sword
Supplies Rogero, now to sense restor'd. 445

Fell Discord sees, and sees with joyful eyes,
Strife follow strife, on tumult tumult rise;
Secure of ill, her sister Pride she calls,
With her to seek again the cloister'd walls,

But let them hence—while we attend the fight, 450
Where, on the forehead of the Sarzan knight,
Rogero drove his weighty blade so well,
That backward on his steed the rider fell:
His harden'd scales behind, his haughty crest,
And clanking helm, Frontino's crupper press'd; 455
While thrice, and four times, here and there he reel'd,
And seem'd just falling on the grassy field:
Nor had his open'd grasp the sword retain'd,
But that a chain secur'd it to his hand.

With Mandricardo fierce Marphisa wag'd 460
A dreadful fight, that all his force engag'd,
Not less the Tartar fought with temper'd charms;
Their corslets well secur'd each breast from harms,
And either equal seem'd in strength and arms. }
At length Marphisa's courser wheeling round 465
In narrow circuit on the slippery ground,
Fell sidelong down, and while to rise he strove,
Fierce Mandricardo Brigliadoro drove

Against his flank, forgetting knightly lore,
And low to earth the struggling courser bore. 470

With grief Rogero saw the warrior-maid
In evil plight, nor long his help delay'd:
On Mandricardo swift the sword he sped:
The well-aim'd stroke had cleft the Tartar's head,
With Balifarda had the youth been arm'd, 475
Or the fierce Tartar's helm less strongly charm'd.

The king of Algiers, now recovering, view'd
Young Richardetto, whom he saw intrude
With daring aid the combat to molest,
Which late his powerful arm Rogero press'd. 480

But Malagigi, deep in magic taught,
A strange device to save his kinsman wrought.

On Doralis he now his power assay'd,
And in her beast a subtle fiend convey'd:
The palfrey, late so gentle to command, 485

That only mov'd by her directing hand,
The sudden impulse of the demon found,
And thrice ten feet he vaulted from the ground;

Then lighting on the turf, the frantic steed
Runs as the spirit drives; with furious speed 490

He bears the damsel, shrieking with affright,
And leaves behind the feather'd arrow's flight.

Rous'd at her voice, the son of Ulien stays
 His arm from combat, and the fair surveys.
 The fair he follows, rapid as the wind, 495
 And Mandricardo spurs as swift behind.

Meantime Marphisa from the earth arose,
 (With rage and shame her generous bosom glows)
 And burning for revenge, too late beheld
 The Tartar champion distant on the field. 500
 Rogero deem'd disgrace must stain his name,
 In good Frontino thus to yield his claim:
 The martial virgin and the youth agree
 To chace the knights on whom they wish'd to see
 Their full revengè, and, if unfound before, 505
 They hop'd to view them with the Turkish power;
 Where lest the siege might work the Pagans woe,
 The knights would haste to attack the Christian foe.

But ere Rogero yet the fount forsook,
 A courteous leave of every chief he took; 510
 To Richardetto first the gentle knight
 Firm friendship vows, in good or evil plight;
 Then to his sister, by the youth, conveys
 Fair thoughts and greeting, couch'd in cautious phrase;
 Such cautious phrase, as may her fears remove, 515
 Yet no suspicion wake of secret love.

To Malagigi, Vivian, then in few

To wounded Aldiger, he bids adieu.

Marphisa, eager Paris' walls to find,

Scarce bent a thought on those she left behind. 520

The palfrey, with the hidden demon, held

Its rapid flight; no crossing stream repell'd

His bounding course; nor wood, nor tangled shade,

Nor fen, nor cliff, nor rock his speed delay'd,

Till through the Franks and English camps he bore

(And all th' unnumber'd host that Christ adore) 526

Th' affrighted dame, and safely had restor'd

To her lov'd fire, Granada's royal lord.

Meanwhile the son of Agrican purfu'd

The flying fair, and soon no longer view'd; 530

With him was Ulien's son *, but either knight

Had lost her image from his straining sight :

Yet, by the track, they follow'd still the chace,

As nimble hounds the goat or leveret trace;

Till either lover certain tidings gain'd; 535

That with her fire the princely dame remain'd.

Take heed, O Charles!—What clouds thy sky de-
form !

Hang o'er thy head, and threat the bursting storm !

* R O D O M O N T.

Not

Not these alone, but king Gradasso stands,
 With Sacripant, prepar'd t' assault thy bands; 340
 While Fortune, to complete thy ruin'd state,
 Has robb'd thee of each glorious lamp, that late
 Of strength and wisdom beam'd thy purest light,
 And leaves thee wrapt in long enduring night.
 Orlando now, estrang'd to every thought 345
 Of good or evil, roves with wit distraught,
 O'er hill and plain, unhous'd and naked lies
 In heat or cold; in fair or stormy skies.
 Rinaldo, scarce with better sense inspir'd,
 Forsakes his prince, when aid is most requir'd, 350
 To seek, with love and jealous fears oppress'd,
 The cruel tyrant of his bleeding breast.
 The battle fought, in which such praise he won,
 The Moors besieg'd and freed the regal town,
 Paris again he views; each convent there 355
 And every dome explores with fruitless care;
 Yet still he roves, insensible of shame,
 Lost to his own, and to his country's fame.

But he, our ancient foe, through whom the hand
 Of hapless Eve transgress'd the high command, 360
 With livid eyes imperial Charles beheld,
 What time vain love had from the camp expell'd

Albano's

Albano's knight* ; he mark'd, with horrid joy,
 What force might then the Christian powers annoy ;
 And now together brought against their host, 565
 The flower of arms the Pagan world could boast.
 He fires the king Gradasso, fires the breast
 Of noble Sacripant ; who, since releas'd
 From old Atlantes' castle, where they shar'd
 One common error, had companions far'd 570
 Along the way ; he these incites to aid
 Their sovereign Agramant, and Charles invade,
 Himself, by secret ways, their course attends,
 And safely brings to join their Pagan friends.
 Another fiend he bids with trusty speed 575
 Fierce Rodomont and Mandricardo lead,
 Where late the demon urg'd the damsel's steed. }
 A third he sent, that to the Pagan crew
 Valiant Rogero and Marphisa drew ;
 Nor yet so swiftly to the camp they pass'd, 580
 But, of the six, these two arriv'd the last.

And now, the council held, these dauntless four †,
 In spite of Charles, and all his numerous power,
 To raise the siege with joint consent agree,
 And Agramant from threatening ruin free. 585

* RINALDO. † GRADASSO, SACRIPANT, RODO-
 MONT, and MANDRICARDO.

Compact and firm they bend their daring way,
Where deep encamp'd the Christian army lay ;
While Africa and Spain aloud they cry,
Now Pagans known to every ear and eye.
Through all the host, to arms, to arms, resound 590
A thousand tongues ; but ere their arms they found,
The hostile steel invades them unprepar'd,
And the first onset puts to flight the guard.
The Christian chiefs, while thus the tumult spread,
Scarce knew from whom or why their soldiers fled :
But, while uncertain whence th' incursion came, 596
They call the troops of every clime and name ;
Loud beats the drum, the trump its clangor pours ;
The sky re-echoes, and the tumult roars !
Imperial Charles, amidst his gathering bands, 600
All, save his helmet, arm'd, intrepid stands.
By threats now these, now those, he stays from flight,
And others he beholds (too cruel sight !)
With heads dissever'd by the furious blade ;
With bosoms pierc'd, and bowels open laid ; 605
While some return (escap'd from greater harms)
With bleeding limbs, with sever'd hands and arms.
Advancing still, he sees where, scatter'd round,
Unnumber'd wretches gasping bite the ground ;
Where'er

Where'er this little band resistless came, 610
 They left eternal monuments of fame;
 While Charles with wonder, grief, and shame, beheld
 The fearful carnage of so dire a field.

These noble four the tents had scarcely gain'd,
 Where Afric's monarch still entrench'd remain'd; 615
 When, on a different side, th' assault to aid,
 Appear'd Rogero and the martial maid *.
 As, when the mine is fir'd, the straining eyes
 Scarce view the flame as thro' the train it flies,
 Till bursting forth, the fury levels all; 620
 Tears the firm rock, and shakes the strongest wall:
 So swift Rogero and Marphisa flew,
 Such was their rage amongst the warring crew.
 Aslant, direct, their furious blows they dealt;
 Disscver'd scalps, lopt arms, and shoulders felt 625
 The trenchant steel, while, for escape too slow,
 Huge crowds divide before each gallant foe.
 Whoe'er has seen o'er hill or vale a storm
 Sweep fiercely on; with ruin part deform,
 Part leave unhurt; may judge how, scatter'd wide,
 This warlike couple pierc'd the martial tide. 631
 Those who from Rodomont's destructive hand
 Had fled, and 'scap'd the first assailing band

* MARPHISA.

Of four such warriors, gave their thanks to heaven,
 That strength and swiftness to their feet had given: 635
 But now, with weapons brandish'd at their breast,
 By bold Rogero and Marphisa prest,
 They see too late that him who stands or flies,
 What fate has sentenc'd, fate to shun denies.

With thanks to Heaven the grateful Pagans view 640
 The timely succour, and their hopes renew;
 No longer fear the meanest warrior knows,
 Each Pagan arm defies a hundred foes.
 The Moorish drum, the horn, and timbrel blend
 Their rattling sounds, that to the skies ascend; 645
 While streamers rais'd aloft, and banners join'd,
 With mix'd devices tremble in the wind.
 Not less the chiefs of Charles, with skilful care,
 The troops of Brittany and France prepare:
 With these Italian, German, English, close 650
 Their martial lines, and fierce the battle glows.
 Stern Rodomont, of unresisted might;
 Fierce Mandricardo, dreadful in the fight;
 Noble Roger, virtue's constant stream,
 And brave Gradasso, every nation's theme; 655
 Marphisa steel'd in arms, and with her join'd
 Circassia's * prince, who never lagg'd behind;

* SACRIPANT,

All

All these, united, Gallia's king assail'd,
 And urg'd his vows that nothing now avail'd.
 On John and Dennis (patron faints) he calls, 660
 But soon compell'd retires to Paris' walls.
 Th' o'erbearing valour of this matchless train
 (The knights and dame) my feeble muse in vain
 Attempts to paint, nor can describe in speech
 What beggars fancy, and no words can reach. 665

Whate'er cool thought or strength of nerve supply'd,
 Intrepid Brandimart had vainly try'd;
 Till forc'd at length to give the tempest way,
 Slow he recedes, and scarce resigns the day.
 The cries of orphans, and the widows' moans, 670
 Sons for their fathers, fathers for their sons,
 From earth ascending reach'd th' empyreal height,
 Where Michael sate in realms of purest light.
 He heard; and looking down with sad survey,
 Beheld the food of wolves and birds of prey, 675
 Stretch'd in their blood by thousands on the plain,
 Of every nation, his lov'd people slain.

The blessed Angel blush'd celestial red,
 To find his great Creator ill obey'd:
 To Discord late he gave his high command, 680
 To kindle strife amidst the Pagan band;

Far

Far different now, he sees the Pagans' hate
 All firmly join'd against the Christian state.
 And now to where in cloister'd walls he spy'd
 Fell Discord late, his rapid wings he ply'd: 685
 Again he found where 'midst the monks she sate,
 And at a chapter urg'd the dire debate:
 Pleas'd with their strife, she view'd with joyful eye,
 Cast at each other, prayers and masses fly.
 With holy warmth the great Archangel burn'd, 690
 Her by the locks he seiz'd, and seizing spurn'd;
 Then in his hand a hallow'd crozier took,
 And oft severely urg'd th' avenging stroke:
 Mercy! ah, mercy!—(loud the fury yell'd, 694
 While close the heavenly nunciate's knees she held)
 Who thus dismiss'd her—Hence! nor more forsake
 Yon hostile camp, my heavier wrath to wake.

Tho' Discord, sorely bruis'd, with back and breast
 The livid marks of many a stripe confess'd,
 Yet trembling more with fear of future harm, 700
 From the strong power of that angelic arm;
 Her bellows swift she seiz'd, with kindling fire,
 And store of fuel that might well conspire
 To increase the flame, with which her ruthless art
 Lights up fell strife in every warrior's heart. 705

†

Their

Their quarrels told, each to the monarch shows
The causes whence their late diffentions rose ;
Deferr'd, by general voice, to free the bands
Of Spain and Afric from the Christian's hands ;
But now, since, fortune chang'd, they fear no more 710
A new assault from Charles' defeated power,
They begg'd his voice the contest to decide,
By whom in fight their claims should first be try'd.
Marphisa, with the rest, enforc'd her right,
To meet with instant arms the Tartar knight. 715
Not less would Rodomont conclude the strife,
That to himself or rival gives the wife.
Rogero calls on Sarza's prince to yield
His ill-got courser, or to prove the field.
More to perplex their broils, the Tartar came, 720
And once again oppos'd Rogero's claim
To bear the bird with silver wings display'd :
And, as he spoke, such wrath his bosom sway'd,
He dar'd the three at once to combat call,
By one sole trial to determine all : 725
Alike the rest in mingled fight had clos'd,
But that the king his high commands oppos'd.

King Agramant, that further strife may cease,
With prayers and soothing words entreats the peace :

In vain he soothes and prays—with deafen'd ear 730
Each knight refuses peace or truce to hear.

And now his thoughts suggest, the warriors' names
Inscrib'd on lots shall fix their several claims :

He bids four scrolls the written names disclose :

One Rodomont and Mandricardo shows ; , 735
With Mandricardo one Rogero bears ;

Rodomont with Rogero one declares :

One Mandricardo with Marphisa joins :

These to be drawn, as fickle chance inclines,
The king commands ; and lo ! the first that came 740
Bore Sarza's king and Mandricardo's name ;

Next, with Rogero Mandricardo stood ;
Rodomont and Rogero third were view'd ;
Last Mandricardo with Marphisa join'd,

Which fore oppress'd the martial virgin's mind. 745

Not far from Paris' walls a tract of ground
Was seen, a little mile in compass round ;
Where, in theatric guise the seats dispos'd,
With gentle rise a middle space enclos'd.

The lifts were here design'd : with busy care 750

The workmen clear'd the ground and form'd a square
Of large extent, and fenc'd on either hand

With two wide gates, as ancient rites demand ;

And

And at the barrier's end, the lifts to close,
On either side a fair pavilion rose. 755

Now came the day when swords must fix the right,
Nam'd by the king, and wish'd by either knight.

Plac'd in the tent that to the west appears,

His giant limbs the king of Algiers rears :

There bold Ferrau and Sacripant assist 760

With scaly hide to arm him for the list ;

And where the eastern gate its valves expands,

With king Gradasso Falsirones stands.

These for the son of Agrican * employ

Their aid, to deck him with the arms of Troy. 765

High on a lofty throne, in royal state,

The king of Spain and king of Afric fate ;

Then Stordilano and the peers around,

Above the rest with rank and honours crown'd.

Happy is he who on some rising height, 770

Or tufted tree, can sit to view the fight.

Great is the press, and deep on every side,

Through all the camp, was pour'd the mingled tide.

Castilia's queen was present ; many a queen

And princess fair, with noble dames, were seen ; 775

From Arragon, Castile, Granada's land,

And near the bound where Atlas' pillars stand.

* MANDRICARDO.

There Stordilano's lovely daughter plac'd,
 Appears with robes of various colour grac'd:
 One vest was green, and one a paly red 780
 Of soften'd dye, like roses newly shed.
 A garb Marphisa wore, that might proclaim
 (Succinct and simple) both the knight and dame.
 Like her apparell'd, near Thermodöon's flood,
 Hippolyta with all her virgins stood. 785
 Already in his coat of arms array'd,
 That royal Agramant's device display'd,
 The herald enter'd, in the list to draw
 The bounds prescrib'd, and state the duel's law.

While now impatient throngs demand the fight; 790
 While oft their murmurs chide, and oft invite
 Each tardy champion; sudden in their ear
 From Mandricardo's tent a noise they hear,
 Loud and more loud, deriv'd from wrathful words
 Between the Sericane and Tartar lords. 795

Soon as the king of Sericane had drest
 The Tartar monarch in his martial vest,
 He stood prepar'd to gird the sword, which try'd
 In battle lately grac'd Orlando's side;
 When DURINDANA on the hilt he views, 800
 And that device Almontes wont to use:

He

He saw, and knew full well the mighty sword,
That arm'd the hand of great Anglante's lord;
Which prize to gain he left his native shore,
With such a force as ne'er was seen before. 805

He ask'd what chance had given the fatal blade,
And when and where he from the earl convey'd
The precious prize—The Tartar prince reply'd:
Erewhile in fight Orlando's force I try'd:
At length he feign'd a madness, to conceal 810
His dastard feelings, for he knew too well,
While this he wore, he still his trembling life
With me must risk in never-ending strife.

Ere yet he ceas'd, Gradaffo took the word:
To thee, nor any, will I yield the sword; 815
Justly I claim what long I toil'd to gain,
My gold expended and my people slain.
Thou found'st it distant from its owner thrown,
But, found by me, I claim it for my own.
This falchion shall the right I plead maintain— 820
This, if thou seek'st to win, by force thy arms must
gain.

At this the Tartar rais'd his daring head:
What sweeter sound can reach my ears (he said)
Than aught that speaks of war?—But first, in field,
To thee his turn the Sarzan prince must yield. 825

Doubt not I stand prepar'd for thee—for all—
To answer thine and every mortal call.

Rogero then, increasing strife to breed :
Think not to infringe the terms so late agreed.
Lo ! here I stand to abide the lot's decree ; 830
The first to Rodomont—the next to me.

Let each of you be Mars, (then made reply
Fierce Mandricardo) each his prowess try :
What arm shall dare forbid me here to wield
The trusty falchion, or the glorious shield ? 835

Then fir'd to wrath, with steely gauntlet bent,
A stroke at Sericana's king he sent,
Whose better hand at unawares it took,
And Durindana strait his grasp forfook.

Gradasso, bursting then with rage, beheld 840
The sword disputed from his hand compell'd :
Indignant shame, despite, and burning ire,
Flush'd all his face ; his eyeballs sparkled fire :
Fierce for revenge a backward step he made ;
And stood in act to draw the deadly blade ; 845

But Mandricardo, ever unappall'd,
Him and Rogero to the battle call'd,
Come, both at once—come, Rodomont ! (he cry'd)
To make the third, and come all three defy'd.

Thus

Thus fearless he ; and as the word he spoke, 850
 In his right hand Almontes' weapon took,
 Firmly embrac'd his shield, for fight prepar'd,
 And good Rogero and Gradaffo dar'd.
 Nor this nor that would yield ; and now enrag'd
 All three at once a medley war had wag'd ; 855
 Nor could the world their souls to peace have won,
 But lo ! the Spanish monarch, with the son *
 Of great Troyano came, whose presence quell'd
 Their frantic rage, and each in reverence held.

While Agramant with soothing words address'd, 860
 Affays by turns to appease each angry breast,
 New sounds of tumult in the western tent,
 From Rodomont and Sacripant were sent.
 Beside the chiefs the generous courser stood,
 Who dash'd around the whitening foam, and chew'd
 The golden bit ; the steed, Frontino nam'd, 866
 Whose loss so late Rogero's wrath inflam'd.
 Meanwhile the generous Sacripant, whose care
 Must such a champion for the list prepare,
 Observ'd the gallant steed with nearer view, 870
 When soon his marks and faultless limbs he knew,
 And own'd his Frontaletto, for whose sake
 He went on foot, nor other steed would take :

* AGRAMANT.

Stolen by Brunello, on that luckless day,
 When from the fair * he snatch'd her ring away; 875
 When from her side Marphisa's sword he bore,
 And with his plunder reach'd Biferta's shore;
 Then gave Rogero Balisarda fam'd,
 With this good courser, since Frontino nam'd.
 Each certain proof the fierce Circassian weigh'd, 880
 Then turning to the Sarzan king, he said:
 Know, chief! this steed is mine—behold my sword
 Shall full conviction of the truth afford.
 But for our friendship late, to thee I yield
 My generous courser for the approaching field, 885
 My right acknowledg'd first; else hope in vain
 To keep a steed which only arms can gain.

Stern Rodomont reply'd—Our friendship late
 Shall, as thou say'st, awhile prevent debate:
 But mark the issue of th' expected fight, 890
 This day, between me and the Tartar knight,
 When his example shall thy prudence wake,
 To beg me as thy gift this steed to take.
 With thee 'tis courteous to be brutal (cries
 Fierce Sacripant, with lightening in his eyes) 895
 But mark me plainer now—henceforth take heed
 How far thou dar'st usurp my trusty steed:

* ANGELICA.

My

My right I challenge, while this better hand
Can, grasp'd aloft, the vengeful sword command.

Cries, threats succeed, and ire enkindles ire: 900

Less swift through stubble runs the blaze of fire.

Fierce Rodomont complete his armour wears,

But Sacripant nor helm nor cuirass bears,

Yet seems (so well he knew his sword to wield)

Securely fenc'd, as with a covering shield: 905

Though Rodomont excell'd in nerve of fight,

No less in skill excell'd Circassia's knight.

Not with more swiftness turns the kindling wheel,

When from the stone is ground the whitening meal;

Than Sacripant, with hand and foot untir'd, 910

Turn'd, chang'd, and parry'd still as need requir'd.

Their swords Ferrau and Serpentino drew,

And 'midst the chiefs themselves undaunted threw:

Then Isolero, king Grandonio came,

And many nobles of the Moorish name. 915

Now to king Agramant, perplex'd in thought,

A messenger th' unwelcome tidings brought,

That Sacripant, with Rodomont engag'd,

A cruel battle for his courser wag'd.

Then thus the king bespoke the lord of Spain: 920

Amidst these new alarms, thou here remain,

Left

Left aught should worse among these chiefs befall,
While I attend where yonder tumults call.

When Rodomont his royal lord beheld,
He stay'd his weapon, and his fury quell'd: 925

Not with less awe Circassia's prince retir'd,
When Agramant appear'd; who now enquir'd,
With kingly looks, and with majestic tone,
From what new cause this sudden strife was grown.

Amidst the train appear'd Marphisa bold, 930

Who, while his courser's loss the warrior told,

In colour chang'd, for on the self-same day

A robber's hand * had borne her sword away.

Advancing near, her eyes confess'd the steed,

On which Brunello 'scap'd with winged speed. 935

Now by her squire she bade her helm be lac'd,

Her other parts in shining steel were brac'd;

Then, with her vizor clos'd, she went and found

Brunello seated midst the peers around.

Him, when she saw, the dame with furious heat 940

Seiz'd by the throat, and dragg'd him from his seat;

And bore him thus before Troyano's heir,

Then deep engag'd to heal intestine war;

To Afric's king her trembling prisoner took,

And thus address'd him with a haughty look. 945

* BRUNELLO.

This

This wretch, thy vassal, by my hand ere long
 Aloft suspended, shall atone the wrong
 My honour felt—for know his shameful theft,
 Him of his horse, me of my sword bereft.
 Since some may urge, ill-chosen time I take, 950
 When civil broils so many murmurs make ;
 Three days I respite his determin'd fate :
 Meanwhile would any friend prolong his date,
 Let such appear—if not ere then releas'd,
 I give him to the birds a welcome feast. 955

She said ; and waiting no reply, pursu'd
 Her destin'd way to reach the neighbouring wood :
 Brunello on her courser's neck she cast,
 And in his locks the martial virgin fast
 Her hand secur'd, while loud he shriek'd and pray'd,
 By name invoking every friend for aid. 961

King Agramant, amid these tumults tost,
 Where thought itself to find a clue was lost,
 Above the rest was forely now displeas'd,
 To view Brunello by Marphisa seiz'd; 965
 And stood prepar'd to follow, with his hand
 To avenge th' affront that regal power sustain'd :
 But grave Sobrino, present, soon inclin'd
 To better thoughts the prince's wrathful mind.

It

It ill beseem'd, in such a cause (he said) 970
So great a king, of sovereign kings the head,
To wage a fight, where, should his arms succeed,
More blame than honour must attend the deed :
When men would say—" Much has our king obtain'd,
Who scarce hard conquest o'er a woman gain'd !" 975
Thou canst (he added) to Marphisa send,
That she his sentence may to thee commend
As king and judge—and first thy promise plight,
The hangman's hand shall do her honour right.

Sobrinó's words the monarch's warmth assuage, 980
Who listens to his counsel just and sage ;
And hopes, by such example o'er the rest,
To soothe to concord each contending breast,
But Discord laugh'd, and triumph'd o'er the plain,
Nor could the tumult of her joy contain, 985
No less exulting stalk'd her sister Pride,
Who constant fuel to the fire supply'd ;
And, with a shout that reach'd the firmament,
The sign of victory to Michael sent.
At that dread voice, at that tremendous sound, 990
The Seine ran back, and Paris trembled round ;
Through Arden's sable groves the echoes spread,
And savage beasts in gloomy coverts fled ;

Blaisa,

Blaia, and Arli, Rhone's far-winding shore,
 The Alps, and mount Ghibenna, heard the roar ; 995
 This Rhodan, Soane, Garonna, Rhine confess'd ;
 While mothers clasp'd their infants to the breast.
 Each furious chief demands the fight to wage,
 And each will foremost in the list engage :
 Their claims, so various, so perplex'd the noose, 1000
 Apollo's self could scarce the bands unloose :
 Yet every art king Agramant would try,
 And first the Gordian knot of strife untie
 Between the African * and Scythian † lord,
 For beauteous Doralis, by both ador'd. 1005
 He meant the damsel should decide their loves,
 And name the consort whom her choice approves ;
 So, at her sovereign bidding, might they cease
 From further strife, and firmly bind the peace.

Before his sovereign lord each peer confirms, 1010
 With every solemn form, the stated terms ;
 Then to the dame appeals : with downcast eyes,
 While her fair face the bloomy colour dyes,
 She owns her bosom held the Tartar dear :
 With wonder all the soft confession hear. 1015
 Fierce Rodomont, as if each sense was fled,
 Scarce dares again exalt his drooping head ;

* RODOMONT.

† MANDRICARDO.

But

But when his wonted fury had dispell'd
The first surprize and shame, that silent held
His faltering tongue, he call'd the doom unjust; 1020
And, snatching from his side his surest trust,
Before the king and camp the blade he draws,
And swears that this shall win or lose the cause;
Not the light breath of woman's wayward will,
Who what they least should value, favour still. 1025
Swift Mandricardo answers to his call:
Act as thou wilt—I stand prepar'd for all:
Yet ere thy ship the harbour safely gains,
A mighty tract of sea unplough'd remains.
But Agramant here interpos'd, and blam'd 1030
The Sarzan prince, who 'gainst all order claim'd
The fight anew—so far the king prevails,
He makes this rising fury strike her fails.

Now Rodomont, indignant to sustain
A two-fold shame before this princely train; 1035
First from his king, to whom his pride gave way,
And next his dame, in one ill-omen'd day—
No longer there will dwell; but from the band,
That late in battle own'd his guiding hand,
Two squires alone he takes, and swift as wind 1040
Departing, leaves the Moorish tents behind.

Him

Him good Rogero had prepar'd with speed
 To follow, and regain his faithful steed ;
 But soon recalling to his generous mind
 The list with Mandricardo next design'd, 1045
 He checks his rein and turns to claim the fight,
 Ere king Gradasso should assert his right
 To Durindana, with the Scythian * knight :
 Yet much he griev'd to see, before his eyes,
 Frontino borne, an undisputed prize : 1050
 But Sacripant, whom no such cause detain'd,
 For whom no other strife, or list remain'd,
 Pursu'd the Sarzan king with eager speed,
 Impatient to regain his long-lost steed ;
 Till envious fortune his pursuit withstood : 1055
 For, 'midst the windings of a tangled wood,
 He left his seat ; when, loosen'd from his hand,
 The courser waited not his lord's command :
 All day he fled ; nor, till the setting light,
 Resign'd his bridle to the weary'd knight. 1060

Now, struck with rage, with frenzy and despair,
 Goes Algier's prince † rejected by the fair :
 In pity Echo from her cavern mourns,
 And to his plaints in plaintive notes returns.

* MANDRICARDO.

† RODOMONT.

O female

O female sex ! (he cry'd) whose worthless mind,
 Inconstant, shifts with every changing wind : 1066
 O faithless woman, perjur'd and unjust !
 Most wretched those who place in thee their trust !
 Not all my service try'd, my love express'd
 By thousand proofs, could in one cruel breast 1070
 Secure a heart, so soon, alas ! estrang'd
 From truth like mine, and to another chang'd.
 Nor have I lost thee now, because my name
 Is deem'd eclips'd by Mandricardo's fame :
 Nor know I what my source of woe to call— 1075
 But thou art woman—that comprises all !
 O sex accurs'd ! by Heaven and Nature sent,
 A deadly bane to poison man's content !
 So hateful snakes are bred, the wolf and bear
 So haunt the shades ; so nurs'd by genial air 1080
 Swarm gnats and wasps, the venom'd insect-train,
 And tares are bred amidst the golden grain.
 Why could not Nature (fostering nurse of earth !)
 Without thy aid, give man his happier birth ?
 As trees, by human skill engrafted, bear 1085
 The juicy fig, smooth plumb, or racy pear ?
 But, ah ! can Nature aught that's perfect frame,
 When Nature bears herself a female name ?

Yet

Yet be not hence with empty pride o'er-run,
To think, O woman! man is born your son. 1090
On prickly thorns appears the blooming rose;
And from a fetid herb the lily grows.

Complaining thus, the king of Sarza rode,
Now murmur'd low, now rais'd his voice aloud:
He spurr'd his steed, but ne'er to sleep address'd 1095
His watchful eyes, nor gave Frontino rest:
Next day his course to Sonna's banks he sped,
(That to Provence with winding current led)
For Africa once more to cross the main,
And see his long-forfaken realms again. 1100
He view'd the river fill'd from side to side
With barks and vessels floating on the tide,
That from afar, with all provisions stow'd,
To Pagan bands convey'd the welcome load.
The country round was subject to the Moors, 1105
From Paris' walls to Acquamorta's shores;
A pleasing tract! and all from plain to plain,
Stretch'd on the right, that touch'd the bounds of Spain.
Now from the ships remov'd, the busy crowd
On many a beast and wain the burthens stow'd: 1110
From different parts the banks were cover'd round
With well-fed herds, that graz'd the verdant ground;

And near the river divers huts were kept,
Where all night long the hinds and drivers slept.

The king of Algiers here, surpris'd by night, 1115
When damps and gloom succeed departing light,
Yields to a country host (there born and bred)
Who begg'd him for his guest at board and bed,
His steed dispos'd ; with various plenty crown'd
The tables steam'd, and goblets circled round : 1120
At length the host dismiss'd his noble guest,
To soothe the silent hours in balmy rest,
Till dawn of day—but all the sleepless night
He mourn'd his changeful mistress' cruel flight.

END OF THE THIRTEENTH BOOK.

THE
FOURTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

THE ARGUMENT.

RODOMONT takes possession of a chapel, which the Christians had deserted, and resolves to fix his residence there. Arrival of **Isabella** and the hermit with the dead body of **Zerbino**. **Rodomont** falls in love with **Isabella**: her fortitude and device to preserve her chastity. **Rodomont's** bridge. Conflict between mad **Orlando** and **Rodomont**. Arrival of **Flordelis**. Single combat of **Mandricardo** and **Rogero**. Grief of **Bradamant**. **Rinaldo** comes to Mount Albano, and prepares, with his kinsmen and brethren, to go to the relief of **Charles**. **Rinaldo** and his company meet a strange knight. Fight between him and **Rinaldo**: the strange knight discovers himself: they arrive together at Paris and are joined by **Gryphon**, **Aquilant**, and **Sanfonetto**. **Rinaldo** hears from **Flordelis** of **Orlando's** madness. Meeting of **Flordelis** and **Brandimart**. **Rinaldo** attacks the trenches of the Moors at night and is joined by **Charles**. The forces of **Agramant** are entirely routed, and himself compelled to retreat to Arli. **Gradasso** seeks out **Rinaldo**, and challenges him to finish the combat formerly begun between them for **Bayardo**.

THE
FOURTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

THE king departing with the morning ray,
Resolv'd by ship to take his future way ;
Yet, like a champion, who with prudent heed
O'erwatches all, attentive for his steed,
That steed so good, so fair, which late he bore 5
From Sacripant and from Rogero's power ;
And, conscious that for two whole days he press'd
Too far the mettle of the generous beast,
He fix'd down Sonna's stream a bark to take,
For speed, for ease, and for Frontino's sake. 10

He bade the ready boatman from the shore
The cable loose, and stretch the dashing oar :
Before the wind the vessel lightly glides,
And the swift stream with swifter prow divides :

But Rodomont in vain, on land or wave, 15
 From cruel care his anxious hours would save :
 He mounts his steed, it follows close behind ;
 He sails the bark, it breathes in every wind !
 All day and night, the liquid road he press'd,
 His king and mistress rankling in his breast : 20
 In vain from shore or bark he hopes relief,
 Nor shore nor bark can soothe his rage of grief.
 Thus the sick patient seeks to assuage his pain,
 While the fierce fever throbs in every vein ;
 From side to side he shifts his place by turns, 25
 But unremitting still the fever burns.

Tir'd with the stream, again he sought the strand,
 And pass'd Vienna and Valenza's land.
 The walls of Lyons next the Pagan view'd,
 And where Avignon's bridge stupendous stood. 30
 These towns, and more, of semblance rich and gay,
 That 'twixt th' Iberian hills and river lay,
 Paid to the Monarch-Moor * and king of Spain
 Allegiance due, as lords of that domain,
 Won by their bands from Gallia's shrinking reign. }
 Thence on the right to Acquamort he bends, 36
 And straight for Afric's realm his course intends ;

* AGRAMANT.

Till near a river he a town survey'd,
 Which Ceres once and purple Bacchus sway'd.
 Here smil'd the fields, there roar'd the surgy main, 40
 And bright in vallies gleam'd the golden grain.
 On this fair spot a chapel neat he found,
 Built on a hill, and lately wall'd around :
 'This, when the flames of war their horror spread,
 The priests deserted, and with terror fled : 45
 Struck with the scite, as from the camp remov'd,
 The hated camp, and arms no longer lov'd,
 The king resolv'd on this sequester'd shore
 To fix his feat, nor dream of Afric more.
 With their stern lord the squires attending dwell'd, 50
 The walls himself, his train, and courser held ;
 Not far his turrets proud Montpelier shows ;
 And, near, another stately castle rose,
 Which, seated on the river's gentle tide,
 The town with stores for every need supply'd. 55

One day, while deep immers'd in pensive mood,
 The king, as wont, a thousand thoughts pursu'd ;
 Along a path-way through th' enamell'd green,
 Approaching nigh, a lovely dame was seen :
 An aged monk, with beard descending low, 60
 Beside her came, with solemn steps and flow ;

A warrior-steed he led, that proudly bore

A weighty bier with fable cover'd o'er;

Here Isabella came—ah! hapless maid!

Who lov'd Zerbino's breathless corse convey'd: 65

Though her pale cheek is ting'd with deep-despair,

Though to the breeze loose flows her scatter'd hair,

Though sighs incessant speak her cureless woe,

And from her eyes unbidden fountains flow;

Through all her anguish love his power maintains, 70

And beauty, with unrivall'd lustre, reigns.

Soon as the Saracen the mourner view'd,

The unlook'd-for sight his changing heart subdu'd;

And from his thoughts expung'd Granada's dame,

As pity yields to pity, flame to flame. 75

With soft demeanour, and with mild address,

He ask'd the cause that wrought her deep distress;

She told the sorrows of her secret breast;

And how, deny'd on earth a place of rest,

Her soul had fix'd to bid the world farewell, 80

And with her God in holy mansions dwell.

Loud laugh'd the Pagan, who nor God would know,

Nor own his laws, to every faith a foe!

He blam'd her erring zeal, to keep confin'd

Such beauty, form'd but to delight mankind: 85

The

The fordid miser, brooding on his store,
Thus hides (he cries) in caves his shining ore ;
Whence nothing good he to himself derives,
And others of his useful wealth deprives :
Snakes, lions, bears are cag'd in fear of harms, 90
Not guiltless maids who breathe but love and charms.

The man of God, who such vain converse fears,
Like skilful pilot that the vessel steers,
Attends his charge, lest lightly drawn astray,
Her feet should wander from the rightful way. 95
Not long the impious Pagan could endure
The holy fire, who preach'd in zeal secure ;
Till rous'd at length, no longer he forbore,
But seiz'd his beard, whence by the roots he tore
The silver hairs ; and with dire rage impell'd, 100
With savage grasp his aged neck he held,
Then, whirling round, far distant thence he threw ;
Swift tow'rs the sea the wretched hermit flew !
Against a rock his trembling limbs were thrown,
And dash'd to piecemeal on the craggy stone. 105

And now the Pagan turn'd with gentler air
Where close beside him stood the trembling fair,
Whom in soft speech, by lovers oft address'd,
He call'd his life, of every good the best ;

His

His balm of hope, his comfort, smiling joy, 110

With each endearment lovers' tongues employ.

Courteous he seem'd—those graces that inflam'd

His cruel heart, his wonted sternness tam'd :

He fondly deem'd by slow degrees to find

Fair Isabella to his wish inclin'd. 115

But she, though lost to hope, would rather dare

The worst of ills than what she fear'd to bear ;

Still pondering on the means, if such could be,

Herself and honour from his power to free ;

With her own hand determin'd to prevent 120

Her shame by death, ere his abhorr'd intent

Should make her wrong the knight, who, late entwin'd

By her lov'd arms, his parting breath resign'd ;

To whom, with heart devout, the mourning dame

Had vow'd to dedicate her virgin name. 125

What shall she do? how shape her dangerous course?

What way remains to elude his brutal force?

Long time revolving in her fearful mind

A thousand schemes, at length her thoughts design'd

One that might save her chastity from blame ; 130

Which here we tell to her eternal fame.

The Pagan now, by words and deeds, confess'd

The unhallow'd purpose of his impious breast :

To

To him the damfel—Would’st thou but ensure
My honour safe, a gift thou may’st procure, 135
Of far more worth than aught thou canst obtain
From what must fix on me eternal stain.

A herb I know, and late have seen, that boil’d
With rue and ivy o’er a fire, when pil’d
With cypress-wood, will (strange to tell !) produce,
By guiltless fingers squeez’d, a sovereign juice, 141
With which thrice bath’d, the body will be found
One moon secur’d unhurt from flame or wound :

That month elaps’d, the bathing we renew,
No longer time avails the powerful dew. 145

The proof of what I tell, thy wondering eyes
Shall witness soon—to thee a nobler prize
(Or much I err) than if this day had view’d.

All Europe by thy conquering arm subdu’d.

In recompense for what I shall bestow, 150

I ask but this—here plight thy solemn vow,
Ne’er from this hour by deed or word to harm
My virgin honour, or my fears alarm.

The damfel thus the Pagan’s suit represents’d,
Who now with new desire of fame possessest, 155
Vow’d all she ask’d, impatient to be made
Alike impassive to the flame or blade ;

Resolv'd to curb his will, till prov'd he view'd
The wondrous water with such spell indu'd,
But meant his compact should no longer bind : 160
No fear, no reverence, in his impious mind
Of God or Saint—for breach of faith the worst
Of Afric's sons, by perjur'd deeds accurs'd !

O'er hanging cliffs, through vallies dark with shade,
From towns and cities far the virgin stray'd, 165
Collecting various herbs, while at her side
The Pagan watch'd, and every motion ey'd.
Such store provided now as seem'd to suit
Her present purpose, or with leaf or root,
Damp evening rose, when to their home they came,
Where she, the paragon of virtuous fame, 171.
What yet remain'd of night, with seeming care,
Employ'd the powerful mixture to prepare,
That bubbled o'er the blaze, while still the knight
With due attention mark'd each mystic rite. 175

Now with his squires, in sportive dice and play,
The king of Algiers pass'd the hours away ;
When from the kindled fire the heat, enclos'd
In narrow bounds, to raging thirst dispos'd
The lord and menials, who insatiate drain'd 180
Two vases huge that Grecian wine contain'd.

Stern





Angelica Kauffman Del.

Arthur Smith Sculp.

Stern Rodomont, till then to wine unus'd,
 Which to his sect the prophet's law refus'd,
 Extoll'd the heavenly liquor far above
 Celestial manna, or the drink of Jove; 185
 And blaming now his country's ancient rite,
 Huge bowls and goblets empti'd with delight:
 From hand to hand, with foaming brimmers crown'd,
 The wine swift circles, and the head turns round.

At length, removing from the crackling flame 190
 The vase with herbs infus'd, the virgin dame
 To Rodomont began—What best may prove
 The words I speak, and every doubt remove,
 Experience, that can sever truth from lies,
 Instruct the learn'd, and make the vulgar wise, 195
 Not on another, but on me, shall show
 The wondrous power this unction can bestow.
 Behold me now prepar'd, while o'er my head,
 My neck, and breast, the potent charm I shed,
 By force, thy sword, undaunted to receive, 200
 And prove if that can strike, or this can cleave.

She said; and stooping as she spoke, display'd
 Her neck uncover'd to the Pagan blade:
 Th' unthinking Saracen (whose wretched sense
 Wine had subdu'd, for which was no defence 205
 From

From helm or buckler) at the fatal word,
Rais'd his fell arm, and bar'd his murdering sword;
And, lo! that head, where love was wont to dwell,
From her fair neck and breast divided fell:

Thrice from the floor the head was seen to bound, 210

And thrice was heard Zerbino's name to sound,
For whose dear sake she found such way t' escape
The Pagan's hand; nor fear'd, in such a shape,
To encounter death, to follow him she lov'd:

Hail, spotless soul! for purest faith approv'd! 215

Fair Chastity, on earth now little heard,

By thee to life and blooming years preferr'd.

Go, blessed soul! depart in peace to Heaven!

So to my feeble Muse such aid be given,

As may with every grace the song adorn, 220

And give thy name to ages yet unborn!

Go hence in peace to Heaven, and leave behind

Thy bright example still to womankind!

In silent gaze the wretched Pagan stood

Abash'd, confounded, stain'd with guiltless blood; 225

Who now, the wine's o'er-mastering fumes dispell'd,

Curs'd his dire rashness, and with grief beheld

The breathless body of the murder'd maid,

And ponder'd how to appease her angry shade:

Since

Since to her mortal part he death could give, 230
He hopes to make her name immortal live.

For this intent, the place where late he dwelt,
Where her fair form his brutal fury felt,
He chang'd or built anew, with spacious room
Enlarg'd, converting to a stately tomb, 235
Of towering height, and in the midst enclos'd
The faithful lovers * that in death repos'd.
Close to the sepulchre a tower was join'd,
The spacious mansion for himself design'd.
A narrow bridge of season'd plank he made, 240
Far stretch'd in length, which o'er the stream he laid
That ran beneath, and scarce the bridge supply'd
Space for two steeds abreast to cross the tide,
Or, meeting, pass : nor plac'd from end to end
Was rail or fence the stranger to defend. 245
Baptiz'd or Pagan, all that travel here,
He will'd henceforth should buy their passage dear ;
For with their spoils, to atone the virgin's doom,
He vow'd a thousand trophies at her tomb.
And oft as near the bridge a warrior drew, 250
The watch to Rodomont a signal blew.
Then arm'd, as guardian of the fatal tower,
The king of Algiers took the adverse shore :

* ZERBINO and ISABELLA.

The slender bridge the dangerous lift supply'd ;
There if the steed but little swerv'd aside, 255
Prone in the river's headlong depth he fell :
No fight, for peril, could such fight excel.
Thus often risk'd, the Saracen believ'd
Whene'er he fell, the rushing stream receiv'd
In draughts compell'd, would purify his soul 260
For sins committed through th' inflaming bowl.
The thirst of fame, to some more dear than life,
Brought many a knight to prove the dangerous strife ;
While all who hop'd the victor's meed to gain,
Resign'd their arms, and numbers there were slain. 265
Of vanquish'd Pagans that the course had run,
Alone he kept the spoils, and armour won :
Of these the names on tablets fairly trac'd,
And hung on high, the polish'd marble grac'd :
But every Christian close in durance pent 270
He held, design'd for Afric to be sent.

The work scarce finish'd—thither came the knight*
Of wits distraught, what time in corselet bright
The Pagan watch'd to guard the tomb and tower,
And all his armour, save his helmet, wore. 275

Meanwhile Orlando, as his frenzy led,
At once o'erleapt the bar with fearless tread :

* ORLANDO.

Him Rodomont, who stood on foot, espy'd,
And thus from far—Forbear thy steps (he cry'd);
This bridge, thou slave! was ne'er design'd for thee,
But noble knights, and lords of high degree. 281

Orlando, stranger now to reason's force,
Of speech regardless, onward held his course.
I must chastise this fool (the Pagan cries);
And as he speaks with rapid feet he flies 285
To plunge him in the stream, nor thinks to try
A strife with one that could his strength defy.

Fair Flordelis, arriving near the flood,
Beheld where on the bridge the Pagan stood
Clos'd with Orlando, while each nerve he ply'd 290
To hurl the madman headlong in the tide.
The virtuous dame, when, with a nearer view
She mark'd his features, well Orlando knew;
And, fill'd with grief, at such dire sight amaz'd,
On him, thus naked and forlorn, she gaz'd. 295

Awhile she stay'd to mark the conflict's end,
Where two such foes, unmatch'd in strength, contend.
They press, they gripe, their utmost fury show,
Each strives the other from the bridge to throw;
And, muttering to himself, the Sarzan cries, 300
What to a fool such unlook'd force supplies?

Now here, now there, he struggles, shifts, and turns,
 With shame he reddens, and with wrath he burns.
 With either hand he seeks in vain to take
 Some firmer hold, that best the earl may shake ; 305
 And oft, between his legs, the Pagan knight
 The left foot now inserts, and now the right.
 Orlando close stern Rodomont compress'd,
 Thighs lock'd in thighs, and breast oppos'd to breast :
 Himself now backward from the bridge he threw, 310
 And with him clasp'd the struggling warrior drew ;
 Both sink together to the depth profound,
 Leap the dash'd waves, and loud the banks resound.
 The water soon divides their struggling limbs,
 Orlando, naked, disencumber'd swims ; 315
 Amid the stream he plies, as with an oar,
 His strong-knit joints, and safely treads the shore :
 Then o'er the plain he speeds his course, nor stays
 To mark how far he merits blame or praise.
 The Pagan, whom his ponderous arms surround, 320
 More slowly gains at length the distant ground.

Thus they ; while safely o'er the bridge and tide
 The damsel pass'd, and round on every side
 Explor'd the tomb, if there her anxious eye
 Might any spoils of Brandimart espy : 325

Yet

Yet though nor arms nor mantle there she view'd,
Fond hopes to find her lord she still renew'd.

Meantime, amidst the camp where Discord rag'd,
Where chief with chief in civil broils engag'd,
Though Mandricardo heard, with conscious pride, 330
The choice of Doralis his claim decide,
Yet short enjoyment can that choice afford,
When quarrels, still on foot, require his sword.
There young Rogero calls him to the field,
And claims the argent eagle on his shield: 335
Gradaffo, king of Sericana's lands,
For Durindana here the fight demands:
In vain the lords of Spain and Afric try'd
To make each warrior's angry strife subside.

Then Agramant—My friendly counsel hear, 340
If yet you prize your sovereign's favour dear,
Let lots decide who first the fight shall wage,
And he, whose name appears, his faith engage
On his own head such strife at once to take,
And, conquering for himself, a conquest make 345
For either's claim; or if his loss ensues,
He, losing for himself, for each shall lose:
But no dishonour on the loser fall;
Whate'er betide, impute to Fortune all.

Content Rogero and Gradaffo heard 350
 The prudent dictates of their king rever'd.
 The names inscrib'd within an urn they threw,
 And, shaking round, the lots a stripling drew.
 Wrote on the first Rogero's name they find,
 But bold Gradaffo's name remains behind. 355
 What words can speak the joy Rogero feels,
 Soon as the fateful vase his lot reveals :
 Nor less the Sericanian chief repines :
 But who shall that oppose which Heaven designs ?
 The people, eager to behold the fight, 360
 Throng every passage with the dawning light ;
 While some impatient for the day's return,
 Wait in the list all night th' approach of morn :
 These judge not of events ; but those whose mind
 Can from the present see what lurks behind, 365
 ('Midst whom Marfilius and Sobrino know
 What most may work their country's weal or woe).
 Oft to the careful monarch's thought recall
 What ruin must the Moorish race befall,
 Whether, by angry destiny decreed, 370
 Rogero or the Tartar prince should bleed.
 King Agramant th' important truth confess'd ;
 But how repeal his grant ? In vain he press'd
 The noble knights, and each by turns address'd. }
 But

But more than Agramant, and more than each 375
That urg'd the Tartar with dissuasive speech,
King Stordilano's lovely daughter strove
With prayers and tears his steadfast heart to move ;
Begg'd him to grant what Afric's prince requir'd,
What with their prince the noblest peers desir'd. 380

Ah! me (she cry'd) what more shall foothe my
breast,

Or calm henceforth my troubled thoughts to rest!

When some new cause for ever can prevail

To make thee sheath thy limbs in plate and mail?

Alas! in vain was once my proudest boast, 385

That such a knight, the bravest of his host,

Could for my beauty, prodigal of breath,

Engage a squadron in the face of death ;

Since now too late I find the slightest cause,

With equal risk thy sword in battle draws : 390

Nor was it love for these unhappy charms

That urg'd thee then, but savage thirst of arms !

By Love I here adjure thee, by the grief

That rends my heart, and now implores relief;

Repine not though Rogero's hand may wield 395

The argent eagle in an azure field.

Thy battle much may lose, but little gain ;

Should now thy arms Rogero's bird obtain,

Small prize for mighty toil ! but should'st thou find
 With face averted Fortune here unkind— 400
 (Nor deem her ever fix'd) what tortures wait
 This heart, that shudders but to doubt thy fate !
 Yet, for my sake, prolong thy valu'd breath,
 The death of one includes the other's death ;
 But, ah ! more wretched far my state must prove, 405
 If first I see the death of him I love.

In words like these she pours the strain of woe,
 While sighs to sighs in quick succession flow :
 The live-long night her tender plaints increase,
 The live-long night she woos her lord to peace ; 410
 While from her eyes, which trickling tears suffuse,
 He sucks, with many a kiss, the balmy dew:
 Then from her rosy lips new sweets he seeks,
 Weeps to her words, and thus in answer speaks.

For Heaven's dear sake, my fair, thy grief control,
 Nor let so slight a cause afflict thy soul : 416
 Did Charles and Afric's king, with all the bands
 Collected here from French and Moorish lands,
 Unite their force to work my single harm,
 No terror should thy gentle breast alarm. 420
 Thou may'st remember when I fearless dar'd,
 (No sword or scimeter my side to guard)

With

With single hand to assault a numerous crew,
 And with a broken spear their force o'erthrew.
 Fear'st thou Rogero, when in fight I wear 425
 Great Hector's arms, and Durindana bear?
 For Heaven's sake, calm thy doubts, thy grief assuage,
 Nor let these trickling tears to ill presage:
 For know, 'tis Honour calls me to the field,
 And not an eagle painted on a shield. 430

Thus he; while yet, with anxious doubts oppress'd,
 The fair, in moving words, her suit address'd:
 But scarce Aurora had with light begun
 To streak the east, and usher in the sun,
 When bold Rogero, to defend his fame, 435
 And to the glorious bird assert his claim,
 Appears in arms, where crowds the list enclose,
 And from his horn a stern defiance blows.
 Soon as this found, the rattling peal of war,
 The Tartar rous'd, no longer will he bear 440
 A word of peace, but from the couch he flies
 With headlong speed, and loud for arms he cries;
 While in his look such savage fury glares,
 That Doralis herself no further dares
 To plead for truce or peace, compell'd to obey 445
 Her knight's stern will, and give the battle way.

Himself his limbs in shining mail attires,
 And scarce, impatient, waits th' attending squires;
 Then mounts the generous courser, that before,
 In combat, Paris' great defender * bore. 450

Soon came the king; the nobles take their seat;
 And soon in arms the eager knights must meet.
 Already now their shining helms are lac'd,
 In either hand each ashen lance is plac'd.
 The signal sounds; and at the dreadful blast 455
 A thousand cheeks are pale, and hearts aghast:
 So fierce they pour to obey the trumpet's call,
 That earth appears to open, heaven to fall!
 On either hand each knight is seen to wield
 The silver eagle on his honour'd shield: 460
 The bird, that once in air could Jove sustain;
 That oft was seen amidst th' embattled train,
 With other pinions on Thessalia's plain. }

While either knight, at such a hideous shock,
 Seems as a tower to winds, to waves a rock; 465
 The crashing spears break short, and to the sky
 (As Turpin sage relates) the shivers fly;
 Whence from the fiery region (strange to tell!)
 Again on earth the burning fragments fell.

* ORLANDO.

The

The knights, as those who know not terror, drew 470
 Their flashing swords the combat to renew :

At either's helm they aim the trenchant steel :

The fearful strokes their sparkling vizors feel :

Swift and more swift the gleaming swords assail ;

Blows follow blows, descending thick as hail, 475

That breaks the trees, destroys the golden grain,

And mars the harvest of th' expecting swain.

Oft have you heard of Durindana's fame,

What fatal wounds from Balifarda came ;

Judge what their strokes must prove, which two such

warriors aim.

480

The Tartar first his dreadful sword impell'd,

That through the middle of the buckler held

Its biting course ; thence through the corselet hew'd,

And to the flesh its cruel way pursu'd.

But sure some Angel's interposing power

485

Preserv'd Rogero in that dangerous hour :

All terrible in wrath the warrior burn'd,

And to the foe his answer swift return'd :

At Mandricardo's helmet from above

He rais'd the sword, but with such haste he drove 490

The gleaming steel, its edge deceiv'd his aim,

Flat on the crest the thundering weapon came ;

Yet

Yet sorely Mandricardo felt the stroke,
 Senseless he seem'd, the reins his hand forsook;
 And threatening headlong thrice to fall, he reel'd, 495
 While Brigliadoro cours'd around the field;
 That Brigliadoro, once Orlando's care,
 Who still laments a foreign lord to bear.
 Not with such rage the trodden serpent glows;
 Not half so fierce the wounded lion shows, 500
 As Mandricardo, when to sense restor'd
 From the late fury of Rogero's sword:
 He spurs his steed, and to Rogero flies;
 He lifts his sword, he measures with his eyes,
 High on his stirrups rais'd, in fell design, 505
 With one fierce stroke to cleave him to the chine,
 Rogero, heedful of the foe's intent,
 While yet the hand hung threatening in descent,
 Beneath his arm impell'd the pointed blade,
 And through the mail an ample passage made; 510
 Then from the wound, with life-blood smoking, drew
 His Balisarda, dy'd to crimson hue;
 And took such vigour from the stroke away,
 That Durindana fell with lighter sway,
 Though backward to his courser's crupper sent, 515
 His brows, with anguish writh'd, Rogero bent;

And had his helm of common steel been fram'd,
That stroke had well the striker's force proclaim'd,
Rogero to his steed the spur apply'd,
And swift at Mandricardo's better side 520
The weapon aim'd, where jointed armour, clos'd
With strongly-temper'd plates, in vain oppos'd:
The fatal falchion, forg'd with potent charms,
Where'er it falls, divides the strongest arms:
Through plate and mail a speedy course it found, 525
And in the Tartar's side infix'd a wound;
Who, loud blaspheming, with such fury raves,
As roaring ocean black with stormy waves,
Prepar'd to prove his strength, the fatal shield
That bears the eagle on its azure field, 530
With fierce impatience to the ground he cast,
And grasp'd with either hand his falchion fast.
Full dearly hast thou prov'd (Rogero cry'd)
Thou ill deserv'st the crest thou throw'st aside;
Now thrown aside, cleft by thy sword before, 535
Claim not to this thy right or title more.

Thus he; but while he spoke was doom'd to feel
The fatal edge of Durindana's steel.

Sheer through the saddle-bow with dire descent,
Through iron plates the gleaming falchion went, 540
Through

Through skirted mail the jointed cuishes found,
 And in his thigh impress'd a ghastly wound.
 From either combatant the gushing tide
 To purple hue their shining armour dy'd;
 That doubtful yet it seem'd of either knight 545
 Who best might claim th' advantage of the fight;
 But soon Rogero shall that doubt decide;
 He whirl'd the sword, by which such numbers dy'd,
 Corselet and side he pierc'd with thrilling smart,
 And found a passage to the Tartar's heart, 550
 His heart unguarded by his ample shield:
 Stern Mandricardo now to fate must yield;
 Must yield the eagle to its youthful lord;
 Must yield his title to the glorious sword;
 And ah! for final issue to the strife, 555
 With sword and targe must yield his dearer life.
 He dy'd; nor yet without revenge he dy'd;
 For, ere the hostile weapon pierc'd his side,
 His falchion, won so ill, he rais'd anew,
 Whose edge had cleft Rogero's brows in two, 560
 But that the wound the Tartar knight receiv'd,
 Of wonted strength his furious arm bereav'd.
 Yet through the helm, with unresisted sway,
 Deep Durindana forc'd its cruel way:

Back fell Rogero senseless on the ground; 565

A purple current gushing from the wound.

First fell Rogero, while the Tartar knight

Still kept his seat, as victor of the fight,

And each believ'd his valiant arm had gain'd

The wreath, in such a glorious list obtain'd. 570

Fair Doralis, in that day's fight deceiv'd

With fears and hopes, th' event with all believ'd;

And gave with lifted hands her thanks to Heaven

For such a period to the combat given :

But when appear'd to all the Pagan train 575

Rogero living, Mandricardo slain,

In different breasts new passions take their turn ;

These smile that wept, and those that triumph'd mourn.

The king, the lords, and knights the most renown'd,

To brave Rogero, scarcely from the ground 580

With anguish rais'd, a friendly greeting give,

And in their arms the conquering youth receive.

All with the knight rejoice, and all express

Sincere the thoughts their secret souls confess :

All save Gradasso, who within conceals 585

Far other feeling than his tongue reveals :

His outward looks the marks of joy impart,

But hidden envy rankles at his heart,

While

While oft he calls the lot of fate accurst,
That from the urn disclos'd Rogero first. 590

Meanwhile a leech of every leech best read
In healing arts, was to Rogero led.

Now bade king Agramant with friendly care
Rogero to his royal tent to bear,
By night, by day to have him ever near; 595

So dear he lov'd him, held his life so dear.
Behind his bed on high the monarch plac'd
The shield and arms that Mandricardo grac'd,
Save Durindana, that all-conquering sword,
Now made the prize of Sericana's lord : 600

Rogero won his arms and gallant steed,
Which good Anglante's knight in madness freed;
But him to Agramant Rogero gives,
Who gladly at his hand the gift receives.

Hippalca now to Mount Albano came, 605
With certain tidings to the love-sick dame :
She told how late, by Rodomont beset,
She lost Frontino ; how at length she met
With Richardetto at the wizard's fount,
Rogero, and the lords of Agrismont ; 610

Then (as he will'd) the trusty maid explain'd
What from Albano's walls the youth detain'd.

Thus

Thus she ; and from her breast the lines she drew ;
 Those lines, which now the dame with alter'd hue,
 More sad than pleas'd, receiv'd, with beating heart 615
 Perusing that which little eas'd her smart :
 For while she hop'd on him to feast her eye,
 She found his words alone her bliss supply.
 Hence on her lovely features mix'd appear
 Soft disappointment and intruding fear ; 620
 Yet oft the leaf she kiss'd, while still she bent
 Her thoughts on him whose hand the greeting sent.
 Her sighs are fire to burn the amorous page,
 Her tears are rivers that the heat assuage.

Ah ! who can Fortune's fickle turns decide, 625
 Who rules o'er all (th' afflicted virgin cry'd)
 And chief in war, where every chance we prove,
 Some chance may keep him ever from my love.
 Alas ! Rogero, who would e'er divine,
 That whilst I lov'd thee with a love like mine, 630
 Beyond myself—less friendship wouldst thou show
 To me, to all—than to thy greatest foe !
 To those thou shouldst oppose, thou giv'st success,
 And whom thy arms should aid, thy arms oppress.
 Hast thou not heard (a story known so well) 635
 That by Troyano's arms thy father fell ?

And

And lo! thy sword Troyano's son attends,
From shame preserves him, and from death defends.

The damsel thus her absent knight reproves,
And with her tears invokes whom most she loves: 640
Not once, but oft, Hippalca (gentle maid)
Would sooth her woes, would oft the fair persuade
To trust Rogero, and with patient mind
Await the period to her fears assign'd.

Meantime has Fame divulg'd the noble deed 645
Of Malagigi sage and Vivian freed,
By brave Rogero and Marphisa's hands
From Bertolagi and Lanfusa's bands;
And how the pair in Mount Albano's bowers
With their lov'd kindred pass'd the joyous hours. 650
This heard, Rinaldo fought with eager haste
His native walls, and there each friend embrac'd,
His mother, sister, every honour'd name,
But chiefly those who late from thralldom came.
Each round the Paladin impatient clung 655
With fond delight, and on his aspect hung,
As round their dam rejoice the callow brood,
When in her bill she brings th' expected food.
Two days he stay'd; the third (deprest with shame
Of his lost country and neglected fame) 660

For

For Paris' walls the knight his home forfook,
And with him all his martial kinsmen took;
With him Richardo, Richardetto rode,
Guichardo, eldest born of Amon's blood:
Th' example Vivian and Alardo warm'd;
And Malagigi with the warriors arm'd,
In aid of royal Charles, whose camp assail'd
By Pagan force, their late defeat bewail'd.

665

But Bradamant, who there expecting stay'd
To wait her knight's return, so long delay'd,
To plead excuse, a sudden sickness feign'd,
That from so brave a troop her arms detain'd.
His banner thus from Mount Albano spread;
The flower of all his train Rinaldo led.

670

Next day, at evening close, a knight they spy'd
Advancing near, a damsel at his side:
Black was his surcoat, black his mournful shield;
Save that a bend of argent cross'd the field.
He Richardetto challeng'd to the course,
Who by his aspect seem'd a chief of force;
And he, who paus'd not, when to combat dar'd,
Wheel'd round his steed, and for the tilt prepar'd.
Firm let me guide the spear, and soon I trust
To stretch my rival headlong in the dust—

680

Thus to himself bold Richardetto thought, 685
 But different far his adverse fortune wrought.
 Full on his helm, beneath the vizor's fight,
 With such a fury drove the stranger-knight,
 He bore him from the seat, with matchless strength,
 Beyond his courser twice the lance's length. 690
 To avenge the fall Alardo turn'd his rein
 With ready speed, but sudden on the plain
 Senseless he fell : so cruel was the stroke,
 Through plated shield the thundering weapon broke.
 Full soon his spear in rest Guichardo held, 695
 Who view'd his vanquish'd brethren on the field ;
 Though loud Rinaldo cry'd—Forbear the fight,
 To me the third attempt belongs by right.
 Thus he : but while he stood with helm unlac'd,
 Guichardo eager, with preventive haste, 700
 Th' encounter dar'd ; nor better could maintain
 His feat, but with his brethren press'd the plain.
 With ardour next, to heal their kinsmen's shame,
 Richardo, Vivian, Malagigi came :
 But now prepar'd, Rinaldo first address'd 705
 His ready weapons, and their speed repress'd.

Each warrior soon had measur'd on the field
 The space to run, and each his courser wheel'd.

Rinaldo

Rinaldo fell not, for his single hand
Compriz'd the strength of all the knightly band: 710
Like brittle glass the spears in shivers broke;
Yet shrunk not back the warriors from the stroke
One foot, one inch—while with the sudden force,
Driven on his crupper, fell each warrior-horse:
But swift Bayardo rose, as swift pursu'd 715
His interrupted course with speed renew'd:
Not so the adverse steed, that tumbling prone
His shoulder lux'd and broke his spinal bone.
The champion, who his slaughter'd courser view'd,
His stirrups left, and soon dismounted stood, 720
To Amon's gallant son (whom near he spy'd
With hand unarm'd in sign of truce) he cry'd.

Sir knight! the trusty steed that lifeless here
Lies by thy force, I held, while living, dear;
And knighthood sure must feel a deadly stain, 725
To let him thus without revenge be slain.

Rinaldo then—If for thy courser dead,
And this alone, thou to the strife art led,
Dismiss thy care—and one from me receive,
Equal to him whose death thou seem'st to grieve. 730
Ill dost thou judge (the stranger thus rejoin'd)
If for a courser's loss thou think'st my mind

So sore distress'd—hear what I now demand——
 As fits a knight, with sword to sword in hand,
 To prove thy further nerve—if thou as well 735
 Canst wield thy weapon, or canst mine excel.

Thus he : nor in suspense Rinaldo stay'd—
 The battle claim'd I here engage (he said)
 And to remove thy doubts of this my train,
 Let all depart, and I alone remain. 740

One only page I here retain, to hold
 My trusty steed—So spoke the baron bold,
 And as he spoke, dismiss'd his noble band :
 They part observant to their lord's command.
 The courtesy by good Rinaldo shown 745
 Claim'd all the praises of the knight unknown.
 The Paladin alighting, with the rein
 Entrusts his page, Bayardo to detain ;
 And when no more his standard he descry'd,
 Unsheathe'd his falchion, and the knight defy'd. 750

Each little deem'd at first his rival's strength
 Would draw the trial to such dangerous length.
 By turns huge strokes they give, by turns receive :
 And neither yet has cause t' exult or grieve
 With valour skill combines ; and wide around 755
 Loud echoes spread the batter'd armour's sound :

Piecemeal

Piecemeal to earth their riven shields they send,
Lay bare the mail, and plates afunder rend,
Thus held the fight, till in his wavy bed
The sinking sun had veil'd his golden head. 760

No rest each warrior knows—no little cause
Can stay that sword which rival glory draws :
That sword which rancour nor revenge could raise
To mortal arms, but restless thirst of praise.
Deep and more deep the glooms of evening rose, 765
Till darkness seem'd to mock their random blows :
Ill could they strike, and worse could ward the blade,
Conceal'd in either's hand with murky shade,

The lord of Mount Albano first address'd
His gallant foe—The hour requires to rest : 770
Defer the fight till slow Arcturus' wain
Has left its place in Heaven's o'er-spangled plain.
Meanwhile in our pavilion shalt thou meet
A friendly welcome and secure retreat,
Attended as ourself, and at our hands 775
Receive such honour as thy worth demands.

Thus far Rinaldo, nor in vain he spoke,
His proffer'd grace the courteous baron took :
And now Rinaldo from his ready squire
Receiv'd a stately steed with rich attire, 780

To sword and spear well train'd in every fight ;
 And with this gift he grac'd the stranger knight,
 Who knew ere long the chief with whom he came
 Was Clarmont's leader, as by chance the name
 Escap'd his lips, while journeying thus they went 785
 To join the warriors at Rinaldo's tent.

This youth was Guido savage, who before
 On stormy seas such toils and dangers bore
 With Olivero's sons *, Marphisa bold,
 And Sansonetto, as the Muse has told. 790
 This knight, in Pinabello's fraudulent hands

A prisoner fallen, was held in shameful bands
 From his lov'd friends, and there compell'd was stay'd —
 To enforce an impious law his host had made,

Guido who now with eager gaze beheld 795
 Rinaldo, that in arms such chiefs excell'd ;
 On whom so oft he wish'd to bend his sight,
 As sighs the blind to view the long-lost light,
 With transport thus began—O ! honour'd lord !
 What ill-starr'd chance could ever lift my sword 800
 On one, for whom such rooted love I feel,
 For whom my bosom glows with kindred zeal.
 Guido my name, one blood I boast with thine,
 An alien branch of Clarmont's noble line :

* GRYPHON and AQUILANT.

If to my fault indulgence may be shown, 805 }
 Thy valiant followers and thyself unknown, }
 O! say, what fair amends can such offence atone?

Courteous he said; and now, on either side
 Th' embrace exchange'd, Rinaldo thus reply'd.

Here cease—nor more disturb thy generous mind
 To excuse the fight—thy deeds confirm thy kind. 811
 Thy birth were doubtful, were thy courage less,
 But high-soul'd thoughts a race as high confess.
 No lions fierce from timorous deer proceed;
 Nor doves from eagles, or from falcons breed. 815

So spoke the knights, and now their way pursu'd,
 And, as they pass'd, their friendly talk renew'd.
 The tent they reach'd, where to his comrades bold,
 Of savage Guido found, Rinaldo told;
 That Guido whom so long they wish'd to view, 820
 Whom Fortune thither to their wishes drew.
 The welcome tidings gladden'd every breast,
 And all in him his mighty fire confess'd.

Now rose the sun from ocean's blue profound,
 With orient rays his shining temples bound; 825
 When, with the brethren, all the warrior-kind
 Of Amon's race, the banners Guido join'd.

Day following day, the band their march pursu'd;
Till now the shores of winding Seine they view'd.
In aid of Charles here Sanfonetto came, 839
(With joy Rinaldo heard his noble name).
Here Gryphon with his Aquilant they found,
The brother chiefs for arms of proof renown'd,
Of Sigismunda born—with these appear'd
A dame, that seem'd far other than the herd 835
Of vulgar females; splendid to behold,
Round her white vests she wore a fringe of gold.
Lovely her mien, replete with every grace,
Though tears stood trembling on her mournful face;
While by her gestures and her looks intent, 840
She seem'd on some important converse bent.
This dame was Flordelis, the lovely wife
Of Brandimart, far dearer than his life,
Who long had sought her lord, and seeking mourn'd,
And now, desponding, to the camp return'd. 845
When near Albano's valiant knight she drew,
And mark'd (for well each Paladin she knew)
His mien and arms—she to the generous chief
Disclos'd a tale that fill'd his soul with grief.
O prince! (she said) thy kinsman so lov'd, 850
Whose saving arm our church, our empire prov'd,
Orlando,

Orlando, once so wise, so far renown'd
For deeds of prowess, roves the world around,
Of better sense distraught; nor can I tell
From what strange cause this dire mischance befel. 859
These eyes beheld his cuirass, sword and shield
Dispers'd at random o'er the wood and field:
A courteous knight I saw, with pious pains,
Collect the mail and weapons from the plains,
And these collecting on a sapling near 869
In martial pomp the splendid trophy rear.
But thither came, on that ill-fated day,
The son of Agrican, who bore away
The hapless champion's sword—think what disgrace,
What loss may thus attend the Christian race, 865
That Durindana, by the Tartar worn,
Should once again a Pagan's side adorn.

Struck with the news, Rinaldo stood oppress'd,
(No jealous pangs now thrill'd his noble breast)
His heart in melting softness seem'd to run, 870
Like fleecy snows dissolving to the sun;
Resolv'd, where'er forlorn Orlando stray'd,
To trace his steps, and yield him friendly aid;
Yet, since by chance, or Heaven's all-ruling mind,
He saw, near Paris' walls, his squadron join'd, 875
He

He first decreed to raise the siege, and chase,
 From royal Charles, th' exulting Pagan race;
 But, anxious for th' event, delay'd th' assault.
 Till night should cover o'er th' ethereal vault,
 And through the host the toils of day had shed 880
 Lethean sleep on every drowsy head.

Imperial Charles, who heard Albano's force
 Prepar'd to attack the foe with silent course,
 Stood with his Paladins, at evening shade,
 To join in arms Rinaldo's welcome aid, 885
 With these was wealthy Monodantes' son,
 Whose love and truth fair Flordelis had won.
 Him long she sought, and soon, from far reveal'd,
 Beheld his buckler blazing o'er the field.
 When Brandimart his dearest consort view'd, 890
 A tender pause of martial warmth ensu'd,
 He ran, he held her close in speechless bliss,
 And press'd her lip with many an ardent kiss.

Great was the truth of ancient times display'd
 In the fair consort and the blooming maid; 895
 Who, unaccompanied, could safely rove
 In lands unknown, through mountain, field, or grove,
 And when, returning, found their dear-held name,
 Clear as their form from breath of tainting fame.

Far

Far in the wood, to wait th' appointed hour, 900
 Rinaldo kept conceal'd his banded power;
 But when the sun the darkening sky forfakes,
 And to the lower world his journey takes;
 When harmless serpents, bears, and all the train
 Of fabled beasts; adorn the starry plain, 905
 Unseen in presence of the greater light,
 Rinaldo leads his troop, and to their might
 With Vivian, Guido's, Sanfonetto's fame,
 Adds Gryphon, Aquilant, Alardo's name.
 His first attack surpris'd the sleeping guard, 910
 And these he slew; for no defence prepar'd:
 To strike the Saracens with deeper dread,
 When to the charge his friends Rinaldo led,
 He pour'd the horn and trumpet's clangor round,
 And bade each tongue his well-known name resound.
 Touch'd by the spur Bayardo seem'd not slow, 916
 But leapt at once the trenches of the foe:
 The foot he trampled, and the horse o'erturn'd,
 And tents to earth and rich pavilions spurn'd.
 Amid the Pagans none so bold appear'd, 920
 But every hair was bristled when they heard
 Rinaldo's name above the tumults rise,
 And Mount Albano echo'd to the skies.

Him

Him Guido follow'd, and with equal might

The sons of Olivero rush to fight. 925

Not less Richardo, nor Alardo less,

With Aldiger and Vivian, cleave the press:

Guichardo next with Richardetto moves,

And each in arms his single valour proves.

Seven hundred that in Mount Albano dwell'd, 930

And round the neighbouring towns, Rinaldo held

Beneath his rule: these rais'd the fearless hand,

In heat or cold, a firm determin'd band.

Not braver troops of old Achilles sway'd,

Though the gaunt Myrmidons his word obey'd. 935

A knight to Agramant the news disclos'd,

Who, lock'd in slumber, in his tent repos'd,

No danger heard; and only wak'd to know

Swift flight alone could save him from the foe.

He starts from rest, he casts around his eyes, 940

And guideless, disarray'd, his soldiers spies;

Naked, unarm'd, now here now there they yield:

No time allows to grasp the fencing shield.

Confus'd in counsel, and in thought distress,

The monarch fits the cuirass to his breast. 945

Marfilius prudent, and Sobrino sage,

With all the peers (whom equal cares engage)

Approach'd, his danger to the king betray,
That death or slavery threats the least delay;
And urge his flight, while by Rinaldo led 950
Destruction hangs o'er his devoted head.

He, with the remnants of his routed train,
In Arli or Narbona might remain:
Both strongly built, and both provided well
With martial stores, could long a siege repel. 955

King Agramant, at length compell'd to yield,
Consents for Arli's town to quit the field,
While deeper night descending round him throws
Her friendly veil to screen him from his foes.
Those whom Rinaldo's, whom his brethren's sword, 960
Whom the twin-offspring of * Vienna's lord
Stretch'd in their blood, and whom Albano's crew
(The brave seven hundred) in the battle slew;
With those by gallant Sanfonetto kill'd,
And those that, flying, Seine's deep current fill'd; 965
The tongue that counts, may count the vernal flowers
When Flora or Favonius paints the bowers.

'Tis fam'd that Malagigi bore a share
In that night's glory of successful war:
Not that his arm the fields with blood imbru'd, 970
Or knights unhors'd, or helms asunder hew'd;

* GRYPHON and AQUILANT.

But

But by his arms he made the fiends repair
From black Tartarean glooms to upper air,
With many a banner feign'd, and bristled lance,
That seem'd in number twice the host of France. 975
Such trumpet's notes he caus'd to echo round,
Such drums to rattle, and such shouts to found;
Such neigh of couriers prancing o'er the plain,
Such dreadful cries, like groans of warriors slain;
That seem'd with horror's mingled din to fill 980
The distant lands, each forest, vale, and hill.

Nor yet the king of Afric's anxious thought
Roger wounded in his tent forgot;
But on a gentle steed of easy pace
He bade his friends the feeble warrior place, 985
Till, 'scap'd the slaughter of the dreadful hour,
A bark he gain'd, and thence the warrior bore
To Arli safe, where at his high command
Must meet the relicks of each shatter'd band.

Not so the king of Sericane withdrew 990
(His tents at distance pitch'd) but when he knew
That he, who thus with unresisted might
Affail'd the camp, was Mount Albano's knight,
With grateful thanks he prais'd the powers of Heaven,
That on this night so rare a chance had given; 995
A chance

A chance that to his hand might yield the steed,
 Far-fam'd Bayardo, of unrivall'd breed.
 For this to France he cross'd the surgy main,
 A hundred thousand warriors in his train;
 And in the generous steed to assert his right, 1000
 Had call'd Rinaldo forth to single fight:
 These on the margin of the briny flood,
 In equal arms, to end the contest stood:
 But Malagigi, by his magic art,
 Compell'd his noble kinsman to depart, 1003
 Borne in a bark that spread th' inviting sail—
 But here 'twere long to tell the wondrous tale.
 Gradasso arm'd his ponderous shield embrac'd,
 Then through the shades, on good Alfana * plac'd,
 Now here, now there, amidst the warring crowd 1010
 He seeks, and on Rinaldo calls aloud;
 Still turning where he sees the numerous slain
 With deepest carnage load the dreadful plain.

Soon as Gradasso, less by arms or vest,
 Than by his strokes, the Paladin confess'd; 1015
 And knew Bayardo by his thundering force,
 That urg'd through yielding ranks his raging course,

* GRADASSO'S mare.

Thou thought'st perhaps (the haughty Pagan said)
 The danger once impending o'er thy head
 So well escap'd; I ne'er again should greet 1020
 Thy arm in fight—but lo! once more we meet!
 And know, to thy confusion, couldst thou bend
 Thy flight to hell, or to high heaven ascend,
 Didst thou that steed bestride, my feet should tread
 The skies' pure plains; or shades that hide the dead. 1025

Then to the king Rinaldo thus began:
 Gradasso! hear—while meeting man to man,
 If thou attend'st, sincerely will I show
 I came to find thee like a generous foe:
 My sword might prove the truth, and here defy 1030
 The tongue that dares to give my fame the lie;
 But ere we close in combat shalt thou hear,
 What undisguis'd my wounded name shall clear:
 Then let Bayardo stand, the noble spoil,
 Design'd by both to crown the victor's toil. 1035

Now to a stream the knights retir'd apart,
 Rinaldo there, with words devoid of art,
 Remov'd the veil that o'er the truth was spread,
 Invoking Heaven to witness what he said;
 Then call'd before them Buovo's prudent son*, 1040
 Conscious alone of all his spells had done,

* MALAGIGI.

Who,

Who, question'd, soon confirm'd whate'er the knight
Declar'd, and own'd the fraud of magic flight.

Rinaldo then pursu'd—What here is known
By living witness, shall alike be shown 1045
By proof of arms, which ready (when or where
Thyself shall name) to enforce the truth I bear.

He said : howe'er the foe his plea believ'd,
He gladly now the proffer'd fight receiv'd.

No more to Barcelona's billowy strand, 1050
Where first they fought the combat hand to hand,
But each agreed, at early dawn of day,
To a clear neighbouring fount to bend his way :
Rinaldo thither must conduct the steed
Between them plac'd, the victor's future meed : 1055
Then should the king or slay, or captive make
Albano's lord, 'tis his the steed to take ;
But should his boasted claim Gradasso yield
To Clarmont's knight, Rinaldo from the field
Must for his prize fam'd Durindana wield, 1060 }

Rinaldo's friends beheld, with sad presage,
His arm in such a dreadful strife engage :
Great was Gradasso's courage, great his might,
Great was his skill, well-prov'd in many a fight ;

And since he now the fatal sword had won 1065
That lately grac'd the side of Milo's son *,
Each for Rinaldo felt his hope to fail,
And at his danger many a cheek grew pale.

* ORLANDO.

END OF THE FOURTEENTH BOOK.

THE
FIFTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

THE ARGUMENT.

COMBAT between Rinaldo and Gradasso: the combat strangely broken off. Gradasso gets possession of Bayardo, and embarks for his own country. The distressed situation of Agramant: Marphisa comes to his assistance. Death of Brunello. Lamentation of Bradamant for the absence of Rogero: she hears news of her lover, that reduces her to despair, and departs from Mount Albano. In her way she lights on Ulania, ambassadress from the queen of Iceland to Charlemain. Subject of her embassy. Bradamant arrives at Sir Tristram's lodge: strange law observed there. She unhorses three kings, and is hospitably received by the lord of the castle, who relates the adventure of Clodio, the son of Pharamond, from which their law was first instituted. Defence of Ulania by Bradamant. Next morning Bradamant departs, and unhorses the three kings a second time.

THE
FIFTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

WHILE doubts and fears in every bosom grew,
Nor doubt, nor fear, the bold Rinaldo knew;

Secure he went, resolv'd one glorious day

Should wipe his late imputed stains away.

At once the warriors met, at once beside 5

A lonely fount their neighing courfers tied;

Then first, in faith unstain'd, exchang'd embrace

With fair and open looks, as if the race

Of Clarmont and of Sericana stood

Ally'd in friendship and ally'd in blood. 10

Without a trumpet's breath to give the sign,

Or herald's voice to bid the champions join,

At once, as by accord, their swords they drew,

And each on each with generous ardour flew.

Now swift, now heavy fell the founding blows; 15

Deep and more deep the kindling combat glows;

Now here, now there, his steps Rinaldo ply'd,

And every art of long experience try'd

To shun the blows, as Durindana fell,

Whose all-destroying edge he knew so well: 20

Or where they reach'd, they reach'd with empty sound,

Where fierce the stroke, but feeble was the wound.

With greater skill the gallant Christian foe

Has stunn'd the Pagan's arm with many a blow;

Now at his flank, now where the cuirass ends 25

And helmet joins, the whirling sword he sends;

But finds the plates and rattling mail unbroke,

With adamant proof resist each stroke

His weapon aim'd; for more than mortal charms

Secur'd the Pagan knight's impassive arms. 30

Thus long, with like success, on either side

These eager knights the doubtful combat try'd;

When, lo! a different conflict chanc'd, that turn'd

The rage of strife which either bosom burn'd:

They saw Bayardo with a monster join'd 35

In dangerous fight; he seem'd of feather'd kind,

A bird of wondrous size and dreadful strength,

And full three yards his bill's enormous length;

His

His other parts the form obscene display'd
Of lonely bats that haunt the gloomy shade. 40

His plumes were inky black, of vast extent ;

His hooky claws on spoil and ravine bent.

His eyes were fire, and cruel was his look,

And like two sails his ample wings he shook.

And hence I deem some fiend might cheat the fight, }
Some lying demon drawn from deepest night 46 }
By Malagigi's art, to stay the fight.

The monster plies his claws—with fierce disdain

The fiery courser snaps the brittle rein :

He snorts, he foams, he strikes his spurning heels ; 50

Aloft in air the feather'd fury wheels,

Retiring swift ; again th' assault renews

With pungent nails, and circling round pursues

The generous steed, who, worsted in the fight,

Forfakes th' unequal fray and speeds his flight : 55

Swift to the neighbouring wood Bayardo flew,

Where thickest trees with tangling branches grew,

While with quick sight impelling from above,

The winged monster good Bayardo drove

From shade to shade, till now a gloomy cave 60

To the tir'd steed a welcome shelter gave,

The track here lost, and baffled of his aim,

The pest ascends to seek a different game.

When king Gradasso and Rinaldo view'd
 Bayardo's flight, no more their hands pursu'd. 65
 A fruitless strife; but either knight agreed
 With separate course to seek th' affrighted steed;
 And he, whom Fortune favour'd first, should bring
 The beast recover'd to the crystal spring;
 And there, in single trial, man to man, 70
 Conclude the combat they so late began.

The fountain left, the knights prepar'd to trace
 Bayardo's flight, but soon his rapid pace
 Had left each knight behind in hopeless chase. }
 As near Gradasso's side Alfana stood, 75
 His seat he gain'd, and spurr'd her through the wood,

Now here, now there, Rinaldo rov'd in vain,
 Till to the fountain's side he turn'd again;
 There paus'd awhile in hope (as each agreed)
 To see Gradasso thither bring the steed : 80
 But when all hope was vanish'd from his thought,
 Alone, on foot, the Christian camp he fought
 Pensive and sad, the strange event to tell;
 But better chance the rival knight beset;
 Whom fortune led with favour'd course so near, 85
 Bayardo's neighing reach'd his joyful ear,
 Till in a cavern deep, immers'd from sight,
 He found him trembling, fearful of the light;

He durst not issue forth, but there remain'd
Till him Gradasso's eager hand detain'd. 90
Then to himself th' exulting Pagan cries :
Who covets strife, with strife may win the prize :
Why should I risk the chance of arms to gain
What fortune bids me now in peace retain ?
He said; and speaking, by the readiest way 95
To Arli hasten'd, where his vessels lay ;
There swift embark'd, and with him thence convey'd
The far-fam'd steed and death-bestowing blade.

Meantime king Agramant, who 'scap'd by flight
The sword and horrors of that dreadful night, 100
To Arli's walls retir'd, in deep debate,
In daily council with Marfilius fate,
To Rodomont he sent, but sent in vain,
With proffers, would the warrior rise again
In Afric's cause, to give him for his bride 105
Almontes' daughter, to himself ally'd ;
And with her hand unite to Sarza's power
The mighty kingdom of Oran in dower.

The haughty chief refus'd the bridge to leave,
Where, many a knight accustom'd to bereave 110
Of arms and vest, he these with pomp display'd
To deck the tomb that held the murder'd maid*.

* ISABELLA,

But

But not like Rodomont Marphisa left
Her king at need, of every aid bereft :
Soon as she heard that all the martial train 115
Of Agramant were captives, fled, or slain ;
That Charles had won, and with the remnant force
Her king at Arli lay, she bent her course
To Arli strait, with offers large to spend
Her wealth and life his honour to defend. 120
With her Brunello (late her fetter'd slave)
She brought, and to the king uninjur'd gave.

Well may you deem, from aid like hers receiv'd,
What heart-felt joy the drooping king reliev'd :
How much he priz'd it (to Brunello's woe) 125
He meant her wretched prisoner's fate should show :
The sentence she enforc'd, himself resum'd,
And freely to the tree Brunello doom'd ;
Then in a lonely wood, of life bereft,
His limbs a prey to crows and vultures left. 130

Impatient of her lover's long delay,
Now Bradamant accus'd each lingering day ;
Less slow the lagging hour to him returns,
Who pines in prison, or in exile mourns ;
Till freed he lives, or sees in prospect rise, 135
His dear-lov'd country to his longing eyes,

She

She thinks some chance the rolling wheels have stay'd
Of Phœbus' car, beyond its wont delay'd.

To her more lengthen'd seems each day and night,
Than that great day, when Heaven's meridian light
The * Hebrew stopt; or that fam'd night design'd 141
To give a young Alcides to mankind.

Now here, now there, she shifts her restless head
On downy plumes whence gentle sleep was fled:
Oft was she wont to watch the breaking skies, 145
And see, with eager gaze, the morn arise;
When Tithon's spouse o'er every fleecy cloud
The lilies white and blushing roses strow'd:
Nor less she long'd, when full reveal'd the morn,
To see the stars again the skies adorn. 150

Oft to a tower she climbs, that prospect yields
Of tufted forests and extended fields.
If from afar she marks the gleaming light
Of arms, or aught that speaks a coming knight,
She thinks her plighted spouse Rogero nigh, 155
And clears her brow, and wipes her tearful eye:
If one unarm'd, or one on foot, she views,
She hopes some messenger with gentle news.

To meet her knight her armour oft she takes,
And hastening to the plain, the hill forsakes: 160

* JOSHUA.

Again

Again all-anxious to her home she turns,
 Again expects him, and again she mourns.
 Now twenty suns had risen, nor yet appears
 Her tardy lord, nor tidings yet she hears :
 While such her plaints, that in the realms below 165
 The snaky fiends had wept to hear her woe :
 With piteous sighs she rends her golden hairs,
 Nor her fair face or heaving bosom spares.

Then thus—Ah! wretched, wretched maid (she
 cries)

To follow one, who, while thou follow'st, flies! 170
 Him wilt thou prize who treats thee thus with scorn,
 Or him implore who never makes return?
 Shall he my heart possess who bears me hate?
 Who holds his virtues at so high a rate,
 Some goddess must forsake her seats above 175
 To kindle in his breast the flames of love.
 He knows to him my heart, my vows I give,
 Nor will he yet my heart or vows receive :
 For him I bleed; for him, alas! I die—
 Yet he, obdurate, can relief deny. 180
 He flies me now—nor more attends my pain
 Than the deaf adder heeds the charmer's strain—
 But wherefore should I hope in vain to move
 With prayers or plaints the ruthless God of Love?

That God, to whom my anguish transport gives, 185
Who drinks my tears, and in my suffering lives!—
Ah! luckless maid! of what shall I complain,
But the vain prospect of desire as vain!
Desire, that lifts me to so bold a flight,
My pinions shrivel in the sultry height: 190
All unsupported now I fall from Heaven;
Nor here a period to my fate is given:
Again I soar, again I catch the flame:
My daring endless, and my fall the same!
Yet, more than all, must I condemn the breast 195
That such desire could harbour for her guest:
A guest that Reason from her seat compell'd,
And every sense subdu'd in bondage held.
From bad to worse my wretched soul is tost,
Nor can I passion rule, where rule is lost! 200
Yet wherefore should I now myself reprove?
What crimes, alas! are mine, but crimes of love?
What wonder that the soft, the frailer sense
Of womankind should make but weak defence?
Was I requir'd to oppose, with wisdom's arms, 205
His looks, his speech, his more than manly charms?
Most wretched he, forbid with longing sight
To view the beams of Sol's all-cheering light!

Not

Not destiny alone impell'd my course ;
Another's words, and words of mighty force, 210
From this beginning love foretold my doom,
My future bliss and great events to come.
If Merlin's prophecy no credit claim'd,
If every counsel for deceit was fram'd,
Him may I well reproach—but never more 215
Can free my soul from him my thoughts adore.
All, all my plaints (for ever fix'd to mourn)
To Merlin and Melissa must return,
Who rais'd, by help of many a hellish sprite,
Fallacious visions to deceive my sight 220
With unborn sons ; and with expectance vain
Involv'd me thus in love's perplexing chain :
Yet, ah ! what motive could excite their hate,
But envy of my happy virgin state ?

Thus she ; while with despair and grief oppress'd, 225
She seem'd to banish comfort from her breast :
But soon the flatterer Hope, intruding, brought
Delusive aid, recalling to her thought
Rogero's parting words, and bade her still
(Whatever fears her gentle soul might fill) 230
Await his wish'd return ; and thus with wiles
Beyond th' appointed time fond Hope beguiles

Her

Her easy heart, and sooths her to behold
Another month in expectation roll'd.

With mind more calm, as on a certain day 235
(Such was her wont) she pass'd the public way
To meet her lord, she heard what must destroy
Each little glimpse of every promis'd joy :

For near Albano's walls the noble dame
Beheld a knight of Gascony, who came 240

From Afric's camp, a prisoner there confin'd
What time near Paris' walls the battle join'd.
With him she commun'd, much of him enquir'd
To lead him to the point she most desir'd :

Rogero nam'd, her ear no further sought ; 245
On him alone hung every anxious thought.

The knight, who knew the peers of Afric well,
Reveal'd whate'er the noble youth befel,

Whom late he saw with Mandricardo stand
Oppos'd in combat, when with conquering hand 250

The chief he slew, and from that glorious day
A tedious month with wounds enfeebled lay,

Here had he clos'd, his tale had well explain'd
The cause that good Rogero thus detain'd.

To this he adds, that to the camp there came 255
A gallant maid, Marphisa was her name,

No less renown'd for beauty than for arms;
In valour first, and first in female charms;
That her Rogero, she Rogero lov'd,
That prince and peer the growing flame approv'd, 260
By signs confirm'd; that oft from morning light
To evening shade she watch'd the wounded knight;
That this alliance, spread from man to man,
In loud reports through all the country ran;
From which fair union warriors yet unborn 265
In future ages might the world adorn.

While thus the knight confirms his fatal tale,
At every word heart-rending pangs assail
The wretched Bradamant: a chillness creeps
Through all her veins, and scarce her seat she keeps. 270
Without a word she turns her courser's rein,
While wrath and jealousy within maintain
A mingled war: each hope dissolv'd in air,
Back to her home she hastes in wild despair.
Behold all arm'd the wretched virgin spread, 275
With face declin'd, upon her lonely bed!
From listening ears to hide her grief she tries,
Her grief that seeks to break in plaintive cries;
Till oft revolving what the knight had told,
No longer can her breast its anguish hold. 280

Then

Then thus—In whom hereafter shall I trust ?
 All, all are false, ungrateful, and unjust !
 Since, dear Rogero, thou canst faithless prove—
 Rogero once so priz'd for truth and love !
 Of all the sorrows, all the tears that flow 285
 From public sufferings or domestic woe,
 My wrongs are first—and since no living knight
 Excels thy mien in peace, thy arm in fight ;
 Since none with thee for prowess can compare,
 For courtly grace, for all that wins the fair, 290
 Why can we not amidst thy palms entwine
 Another wreath, and constancy be thine ?
 Alas ! how easy was an artless maid,
 By him she lov'd beyond herself, betray'd !
 By him whose words her fond belief had won 295
 To think the day-spring dark, and cold the sun !——
 'Midst all the sins with which mankind are curst,
 If dire ingratitude is deem'd the worst ;
 If for this cause the fairest angel, driven
 To chains and woe, was hurl'd from highest heaven ;
 If heavier sins with heavier scourge must smart, 301
 Unless repentance purify the heart ;
 Heed, left on thee some dreadful scourge be sent,
 Who, thus ingrate, refusest to repent !

Of theft, no little crime amidst the train 305
Of human crimes, with justice I complain :
Not for my heart detain'd—that heart be thine—
At such a theft I never shall repine :
But thou thyself art mine, and in despite
Of every claim, thou robb'st me of my right. 310
Thou leav'st me, cruel!—yet from thee to fly,
Alas ! my will and power alike deny !
But not from life—to end this hated breath,
And leave my griefs and thee in welcome death.
O ! had I died while treasur'd in thy breast, 315
What fate so envy'd, and what death so blest !

She said ; and fix'd to die, with furious haste
Leapt from the bed, while at her heart she plac'd
The sword's determin'd point, but soon she found
Her arms prevent the meditated wound. 320
Meantime a better Genius seem'd to warn
Her desperate thoughts—O ! virgin, nobly born !
Think of thy high descent, thy spotless name,
Nor give this period to a life of fame :
Seek yonder camp—there better may'st thou try 325
(If such thy wish) the honour'd means to die.
Before Rogero should'st thou yield thy breath,
Some tears even he may shed to grace thy death :

But

But should his sword thy breast of life bereave,
 What lover could a happier fate receive? 330
 And just it seems that he thy life should take,
 That life his cruelty could wretched make.
 Who knows, before thou diest, but vengeance due
 To thy wrong'd vows Marphisa may pursue;
 Whose fraud (as ill befits a virtuous maid) 335
 Has won Rogero, and thy love betray'd?

These better thoughts approv'd, the virgin fram'd
 A surcoat new that o'er her arms proclaim'd
 Her state of mind, and such as might imply
 A soul despairing, and resolv'd to die. 340
 Well suited to her grief, her vest receives
 The faded hue of sapless wither'd leaves,
 Torn from the bough; or such as autumn shows,
 When from the root the sap no longer flows;
 The veil with cypress trunks embroider'd o'er, 345
 That sever'd like her hopes could sprout no more.
 The horse, which once Astolpho rode, she took,
 Then grasp'd the golden lance, whose lightest stroke
 Each knight unhors'd: this wondrous lance she bore,
 All unsuspecting of its secret power. 350

Thus, unaccompany'd, the virgin went
 Without a squire, and from the hill's descent

To Paris' walks purfu'd her eager way,
Where late encamp'd the Pagan army lay.
She heard not yet Albano's valiant train, 355
Had rais'd th' impending siege and thousands slain.

She leaves Cadurci now, and now she leaves
Chaorse's town, nor more behind perceives
Dordona's mount, and soon the towers espies
Of Clarmont and of Montferrante rise : 360

When, as she journey'd, on her way' was seen
A dame of lovely form and courteous mien :
A buckler at her saddle-bow was ty'd,
And three bold knights attended at her side :
Before, behind, in long procession came 365
Damsels and squires attendant on the dame.

Brave Amon's daughter from her menials fought
To learn her tale, and whence the train she brought.

To Gallia's warlike court (a squire replies)
From where within the arctic circle lies 370
A land remote, she plough'd with heavy toil
A length of ocean from Perduta's isle :
Perduta some, and some Islanda name

This distant isle, where reigns a queen, whose fame
For peerless form was sure by Heaven design'd 375
The first of all her sex's lovely kind.

The

The shield thou see'st to royal Charles she sends,
 And such condition with the shield commends ;
 That this high gift shall grace the bravest knight
 Whom such he holds in dreadful fields of fight. 380
 She by herself, by all the world esteem'd
 The fairest dame, would seek a champion deem'd
 The first in arms, for long her secret mind
 A purpose, nothing e'er shall shake, design'd ;
 That he alone who bears his victor-sword 385
 O'er every chief, shall be her spouse and lord.
 Yon three, that as her guard attend the dame,
 All three are kings, and from three kingdoms came :
 One Sweden, Gothland one, one Norway fways,
 And few with these in arms have equal praise. 390
 These three, whose lands beneath another sky
 Less distant than the isle Perduta lie,
 For her lov'd sake transcendent acts have done,
 To last while planets circle round the sun.
 But she to these, to none, her hand will yield, 395
 Who stands not first, the phoenix of the field.
 I little prize (thus oft declar'd the dame)
 Your deeds that here such boasted merit claim :
 Amidst the three, should one outshine as far
 His rivals, as the sun each little star, 400

I give him praise—but thinks he hence from all
 The knights on earth, to him the palm must fall?
 To Charlemain, whom through the world I hold
 The wisest prince, I send a shield of gold,
 On this condition, that amidst his court, 405
 Him, who in arms may bear the first report,
 The monarch with this honour'd gift shall grace,
 Whether a subject or of alien race.
 His judgment be my guide; and when his voice
 Shall on the bravest champion fix the choice, 410
 Let one of you, who dares in combat best,
 That fatal buckler from the victor wrest,
 And to my hand restore: such knight shall prove
 My vow'd affection, far all knights above,
 And sovereign of my heart possess my throne and love. }

Thus spoke the squire, while Bradamant to hear 416
 Th' unwonted story gave attentive ear.

The tale complete, the speaker spurr'd again
 His steed, and soon regain'd the courtly train.

More slow the virgin kept her steed behind, 420
 While many a thought came crowding on her mind.
 Yon shield (she thought) in France may raise debate,
 And sow the seeds of envy, strife, and hate.
 This thought disturb'd, but ah! her former thought
 Far heavier anguish in her bosom wrought, 425

That false Rogero could from her depart,
 And on Marphisa fix his changeful heart.
 So deep in this was buried every sense,
 That, mindless of the way, she heeds not whence
 Or what her course, or where she next may meet, 430
 To rest at night, a hospitable seat.

As when some vessel by the mastering wind,
 Or torrent surge, is from the land disjoin'd,
 Her rudder lost, no pilot for her guide,
 She floats at random on th' uncertain tide : 435

So rov'd the virgin, while Rogero still
 Engross'd her soul—at Rabicano's will
 She rov'd ; while distant many a mile remain
 Her thoughts, that should direct the guiding rein.

At length she lifts her eyes, and sees the sun 440
 To distant realms his evening journey run,
 And like the sea-gull now in ocean's breast,
 Beyond Morocco, dive to wonted rest :

And ill she judges, if she means to stray
 In open fields along the darkling way, 445
 While the night air with chilly vapour blows,
 Denouncing drizzling rain and freezing snows.

Her courser urging, Bradamant pursues
 The track with greater speed, and soon she views

A shepherd-boy retiring from the plain, 450

Who slowly drives before his bleating train.

Of him the dame entreats some place to show

That, fair or homely, shelter might bestow;

However homely, better there to lie

Than pass the night beneath th' inclement sky. 455

For five long leagues, I know not where can rest

(Reply'd the shepherd) a benighted guest,

Save at a place which Tristram's lodge we call,

But there to abide the chance to few may fall.

What knight should there to find repose intend, 460

His spear must win it, and his spear defend,

If thither comes a warrior, when the place

No knight has hous'd, the lord with courteous grace

Admits the entering guest, but makes him swear,

That should a new one to the rock repair, 465

His arm the stranger on the plain shall meet:

Should none arrive, he peaceful keeps his seat.

When two knights joust, the warrior, doom'd to yield,

Must quit the fort, and sleep in open field.

If four, or five, or more, in social train 470

At once appear, they ready entrance gain:

But ill he fares, who comes an after-guest:

With whom the troop, already hous'd, shall rest

By

By turns the lance : should one, receiv'd within,
Possess the place which others come to win ; 475

These, one by one, shall call him to the plain,
And he with all in turn the strife maintain.

So when the lodge admits a dame or maid,
Alone or with companion thither led,
If chance another comes, whoe'er can gain 480

Th' award for beauty, shall her feat maintain :
But she, whose form her rival's charms outshine,
For air unsheker'd must the place resign.

Instruct me, swain (she cry'd) yon lodge to find :
The simple swain with ready tongue rejoin'd, 485
And pointed with his hand the nearest way
To where, six miles remote, the dwelling lay.

Though well his speed good Rabicano ply'd,
Though Bradamant in either bleeding side
Drove deep the spur, yet through the miry road, 490
Slippery with clay, with drenching waters flow'd,
The lodge she reach'd not till the darkening night
Had quench'd in shade the world's all-cheering light.
She found the portal barr'd, then loud address'd
The watchful guard, and claim'd her right of guest. 495
The place was fill'd (he answer'd to the dame)
With knights and damsels that but newly came,

And

And round the blazing hearth impatient stood,
To fate their hunger with refreshing food.
If still they fast, I trust (the virgin cries) 500
'Tis not for them the cook his fare supplies.
Go—bear my message—I their force defy;
The law I know, and with the law comply.

The guard departing, to the knights convey'd
The bold defiance of the martial maid, 505
That from warm shelter call'd them forth to dare
Th' inclement chillness of nocturnal air:
And now the clouds a plenteous shower began:
Yet each his weapons seiz'd, and man by man
Went where the virgin stood their force to wait; 510
The rest remain'd within the castle gate.

The martial dame these warriors late had seen,
With that fair envoy from Islanda's queen,
To whom they boasted oft with sword or lance
To bring again the golden shield from France: 515
Few knights there were so well at tilt could run,
But 'midst those few the dauntless maid was one,
Who meant not there unshelter'd to remain,
Foodless, alone, and wet with drenching rain.

Meanwhile from windows, and the turrets height, 520
Spectators stand to view th' approaching fight,

Seen

Seen by the moon, as through the shower that streams
 From broken clouds, she darts her watery beams,
 As some fond youth, whom beauty fires to love,
 When at his fair one's porch he waits to prove 525
 The lover's dear reward, with rapture hovers
 The bolt slow moving in his longing ears :
 So Bradamant, whose generous bosom fir'd
 With honour's praise, to noble deeds aspir'd,
 Rejoices when she hears the gates unbar, 530
 And sees the draw-bridge lower'd, and deck'd for war
 Beholds the champions issue to the plain :
 Soon as she view'd them near, she turn'd her rein,
 The length of field to measure for the course,
 Then back at speed impell'd her foaming horse. 535
 That spear she bore, which trusted to her hand
 Her kinsman * gave, which nothing could withstand,
 Which each opponent humbled in the dust,
 Though Mars himself, oppos'd, receiv'd the thrust.
 The king of Sweden, who the first to meet 540
 The virgin mov'd, was first to lose his seat :
 Next Gothland's monarch ran, who headlong far
 Fell from his steed, with heels high rais'd in air.
 In filth and mire the third half stifled lay,
 Roll'd o'er and o'er amidst the watery way. 545

* ASTOLPHO.

Then

Then to the lodge she went, but ere her right
 Was there confirm'd to pass at ease the night,
 An oath she took, whenever call'd, to leave
 The fort, and each new challenger receive.

Struck with her gallant deeds, the castle's lord 550
 To her such welcome as his walls afford,
 With every honour gave : the noble dame,
 Who with the three from far Perduto came
 To distant France, receiv'd with courteous air
 The warrior maid, for courteous was the fair. 555
 Now each saluting each, with smiling look
 Th' ambassadres arising gently took

The martial hand of Bradamant, and led
 The new-come guest, where sparkling deepest red,
 A genial warmth the glowing embers shed, 560

Now to disarm, the virgin cast aside
 Her glittering shield, and next her helm unty'd ;
 When with her helm she rais'd a cawl of gold
 Where, hid beneath, her braided locks were roll'd :
 Her wavy tresses now, no more confin'd, 565
 Fell o'er her neck, and hung in curls behind.
 As when, the scene undrawn, with sudden light
 The stage gay rushes on the dazzled sight ;
 Where many a sumptuous pile and arch is plac'd,
 With gold, with painting, and with sculpture grac'd :

Or,

Or, as the sun is wont from clouds, that spread. 571

Their envious mist, to lift his radiant head :

So when her shining helm the virgin rears,

Her charms shine forth, and Paradise appears !

Full soon the lord of that fair dwelling knew 575

In her, who oft before had met his view,

The noble Bradamant, and graceful paid

His praise and homage to the glorious maid.

Plac'd round the blazing hearth, their moments roll

• In sweet discourse, the banquet of the soul. 580

While from the board the menial train prepare

Their limbs to strengthen with corporeal fare ;

The dame enquir'd who first the law devis'd ;

And in these words her host his tale compris'd.

When Pharamond the sceptre sway'd, his son, 585

The youthful Clodio, to his nuptials won

A beauteous dame, in pride of bloomy prime,

Of manners rare in that unpolish'd time,

Gentle beyond her sex ! — her dear he lov'd,

So dear he scarcely from her sight remov'd : 590

Not less from Io went the watchful swain,

For equal to his love was Clodio's jealous pain.

Here, in this lone retreat, which to his care

His father gave, he kept the treasur'd fair :

He

He seldom issu'd hence ; and with him dwell'd 595

Ten knights, who first for arms in France excell'd.

It chanc'd, while here he stay'd, Sir Tristram came

Before the gate, with him a lovely dame,

Who, by a giant fierce in fetters bound,

Late from his valorous force deliverance found. 600

Sir Tristram hither came, what time the sun,

Oppos'd to Seville's shores, had nearly run

His evening stage, and here besought to rest ;

(No other place to admit a wandering guest

For ten long miles) but doting Clodio, us'd 605

To jealous fears, his earnest suit refus'd.

Long urg'd the knight his just request in vain,

Not prayer nor reason could admittance gain.

Since mild entreaty fails (enrag'd he cries).

Force shall compel what thy base heart denies. 610

With bold defiance then the gallant knight

Call'd Clodio and his ten to mortal fight :

The terms propos'd—should he his feat maintain,

And Clodio with his warriors press the plain,

Himself would there (though now refus'd a guest). 615

Abide, and from the gates exclude the rest.

The son of Pharamond, impell'd by shame,

At risk of life essay'd the list of fame ;

Where,

Where, in the joust, he lost his luckless feat,
Where all his ten receiv'd a like defeat 620
From conquering Tristram, who the portal clos'd,
Against its master, with the ten expos'd
To lie unshelter'd: entering now he view'd
The beauty that had Clodio's heart subdu'd.
Her Tristram fair bespoke: meanwhile without, 625
Her consort rag'd with fear and jealous doubt;
Nor ceas'd to urge the knight with humble prayer,
Forth from the lodge to send his wedded fair.
But Tristram, with severe, though just return,
Resolv'd to wreak discourteous Clodio's scorn, 630
Reply'd—To knighthood must I deem it shame,
From sheltering roof to expel so fair a dame.
If Clodio murmurs thus abroad to lie
Alone, unpair'd, beneath the inclement sky;
A dame I have, that like a rose new-blown 635
In beauty blooms, yet equals not his own;
Her will I bid (if such his wish) to wait
Without the walls, and soothe his luckless fate.
For just it seems the dame of brightest charms
Should rest with him who bravest shines in arms. 640
The wretched Clodio, thus compell'd to stay
Without his gates for slow-returning day,

Lefs felt the chilling damp and freezing air

Than sad reflection of his absent fair :

Listening he stood, while jealous fancy brought 645

Full many an image to distract his thought,

Of those that now, with gentle sleep oppress,

Pafs'd all the quiet night in guiltless rest.

The sun was risen, when to his arms again

Sir Triftram gave the dame, and eas'd his pain, 650

With faith exchang'd upon his knightly word,

Her, as she was, uninjur'd he restor'd.

For this alone his vengeance should suffice,

That all night long beneath unshelter'd skies

The youth he kept; nor would he yet approve 655

That plea, which call'd his crime the crime of love.

Far other thoughts should generous love impart;

He melts the stern, not steels the gentle heart.

Sir Triftram gone, but little Clodio stay'd;

He to a trusty friend in charge convey'd 660

The castle's keep, by this condition bound,

Each dame and knight that there reception found,

Should hold their place by beauty or by arms,

But yield to stronger nerves or brighter charms.

Thus was the law begun, and thus maintain'd, 665

Has to this hour unbroken still remain'd.

So

So spoke the host, and as the tale he ceas'd,
Bade in a stately hall prepare the feast;
Hither by torches' light the guests convey'd,
But chief the northern fair and martial maid, 670
Gaz'd on the stately walls, where every part
With story'd forms confess'd the painter's art.
In rapt attention each the figures view'd,
And while she gaz'd forgot the want of food:
The seneschal and cook displeas'd behold 675
The meats neglected in the vases cold,
Till one at length with better counsel cries:
Your hunger satiate first, and then your eyes.

Now each was plac'd in order at the board
To taste the viands, when the castle's lord 680
Reflects that much against the law he err'd,
Who thus, at different times arriv'd, preferr'd
Two female guests; one only must remain,
And one depart: the fairest might retain
Her seat secure; the vanquish'd maid must go 685
Where chill rains beat, and winds inclement blow.
Two matrons then he call'd, whose judging eyes
Might view the virgins, and award the prize.
With general suffrage all the prize declare
To Amón's daughter, who, the northern fair 690

Had now no less eclips'd with female charms
Than late her knights with manly deeds of arms.
Then to the dame, whose sad presaging mind
This luckless chance already had divin'd,
The host began—Thou must not now complain 695
If, gentle damsel, we our law maintain :
Some other dwelling for thyself provide,
Since 'tis decreed, by present judgment try'd,
That yonder virgin's features, mien, and grace,
(All unadorn'd) thy every charm efface. 700

As when from humid vales thick vapours rise,
And with a sable cloud obscure the skies,
Sudden the golden sun, erewhile so bright,
Is lost in shade of momentary night :
So when the damsel hears her heavy doom, 705
Expell'd to drenching rain and dreary gloom,
Her features change, no more she looks the same,
The gay, the lovely, all-accomplish'd dame.

But noble Bradamant, whose pitying heart
Decreed to take the hapless virgin's part, 710
Thus wisely spoke—Unjustly sure is try'd
That cause, where hasty judgment shall decide
Ere each is heard—for her my suit I move,
Howe'er compar'd our person's gifts may prove,

Imports

Imports not now—I not as woman came, 715
Nor shall, while here, the rights of woman claim.
Yet who will dare affirm, while thus array'd,
These arms conceal a man or blushing maid ?
Ne'er let us utter what we ne'er can know,
And chiefly when it works another's woe. 720
Like me, may numbers length of tresses wear,
Nor more from this the female sex declare.
'Tis known to all how here at tilt I ran,
And if the lodge I won as maid or man :
Why will you then assign the woman's name 725
To one, whose deeds the manly sex proclaim ?
Your law requires that dames should be excell'd
By fairer dames, but not by warriors quell'd :
Yet grant I might a woman prove (which I
Nor wholly grant, nor wholly shall deny) 730
What though I equall'd not her beauty's bloom,
Would you, for that, my valour's right resume ?
Or make me lose, for want of female charms,
What late my virtue gain'd by dint of arms ?
But should the strictness of your law require 735
That one of us must from the lodge retire,
Whose beauty fails—yet would I here remain
(Whate'er your sentence) and my place maintain.

Hence I infer, between yon dame and me,
That all unequal must the contest be: 740
With me contending may she greatly lose,
And should she win, no gain o'er me ensues.
Honour and reason, every gentle sense,
Forbid to drive this lovely virgin hence.
If any in his strength so far can trust, 745
To call the judgment I have past unjust,
Lo! with this weapon I his force defy,
And prove the truth, while he defends the lie.

Great Amon's daughter by compassion sway'd
To see a tender and defenceless maid 750
Expell'd to where the chilling rain descends,
And not a roof or cot its shelter lends,
With reasons urg'd in many a soothing word,
Persuades to generous thoughts the generous lord:
But chief her dauntless courage wins the cause; 755
He yields, and pleads no more the castle's laws.
As parch'd beneath the sun's meridian fires,
When the brown turf refreshing streams requires,
If some fair flower, that hung the languid head,
Feels on its stalk the kindly moisture shed, 760
Again it springs, again each sweet resumes,
And fresh again in vernal beauty blooms:

So

So from this bold defence the maid derives
Recover'd life, and every charm revives.

Now on the savoury cates that long had spread 765
The board untouch'd, the guests impatient fed,
No other champion chancing there to light,
And damp the social pleasures of the night.
The feast each honour'd, save the martial fair :
In sorrow fix'd, abandon'd to despair, 770
A thousand jealous thoughts unjustly brood
In her torn breast, and pall the taste of food.
The banquet o'er, which all perchance in haste
Had urg'd, to give in turn their eyes repast,
Fair Bradamant arose; and near was seen 775
To rise, the envoy of Islanda's queen.
The lord a signal gave; at his command
The torches gleam'd in many a ready hand.

Then thus the castle's lord—The wars that rise
In yonder forms to meet your wondering eyes, 780
Are yet unfought—the sage's two-fold art
Displays the painter's and the prophet's part.
There, in Italian plains, our troops are view'd,
By turns subduing, and by turns subdu'd.
Whatever good or evil chance attend 785
The powers that France beyond the Alps shall send,

In this apartment Merlin bids appear,
Before th' events by many a hundred year.

He said : the story'd deeds that brightly glow'd
In living tints by magic art bestow'd 790
Were long to tell—each guest with new delight
Return'd to gaze, unsated with the sight;
And oft beneath they read each subject told
In characters of fair-recording gold.
The beauteous dames and all the social crew, 795
Beguil'd with talk the hours that swifter flew :
At length the castle's lord to welcome rest,
With honour due, conducted every guest.

Now, all the house to balmy sleep resign'd,
On her soft couch the martial fair reclin'd ; 800
Oft chang'd from right to left her weary side,
But still in vain to sooth her cares she try'd ;
Till near the dawn she clos'd awhile her eyes,
When to her sight Rogero seem'd to rise,
And thus to speak—Ah! wherefore now complain 805
Of lying tales, and waste thy youth in vain ?
First shalt thou see the rivers backward flow,
Ere for another I thy love forego.
When thee I scorn—no longer I delight
In vital air, or cheering rays of sight! 810

Then thus he seem'd to fay—Behold me here
To embrace that faith which Christian knights revere,
My promise kept—chide not my long delay,
Far other wounds than love have caus'd my stay.

At this her slumber fled, and with it flew 815
Her dear Rogero from her longing view:
The damsel then her heavy grief renew'd,
And thus in secret her complaint pursu'd.

What gives me joy, to lying dreams I owe;
What gives me pain, from waking truths I know, 820
As shadows vain my fleeting bliss removes;
But, ah! my constant woe no shadow proves.
Why flies, alas! from waking eye or ear,
What late I seem'd to see, what late to hear?
What are ye, wretched eyes! that clos'd can show 825
Each wish'd-for joy, and open but to woe?
Sleep sooths with hope some hours of anxious life,
But when I wake, I wake to pain and strife.
Sweet sleep, alas! such fancied peace can make,
But soon to truth, and wretchedness I wake, 830
If sorrow springs from truth, from falsehood joy,
O ne'er may truth these eyes, these ears employ!
To pleasure since I sleep, and wake to pain,
O! let me sleep, and never wake again.

Thrice happy you, among the bestial kind, 835

For six long months to quiet rest consign'd :

Does slumber such as mine death's image give ?

I wake, alas ! to die, but sleep to live.

If death indeed resembles such repose,

Come, welcome death, these eyes for ever close ! 840

Now in the east the sun his lustre shed,

And ting'd the vapoury clouds with blushing red,

Bright and more bright effus'd the golden ray,

And gave the promise of a fairer day ;

When, starting from her short and troubled rest, 845

Soon Bradamant her limbs in armour dress'd ;

And grateful thanks return'd the courteous lord

For every honour at his bed and board.

Already now th' ambassadress she found,

Who with her squires and dames attending round, 850

Had left the lodge, and issu'd at the gate,

Where stood the three her coming thence to wait ;

Where till the morn their irksome hours they pass'd,

Their loose teeth chattering to the chilly blast ;

Drench'd in the rain, and every need deny'd, 855

No food to knight, nor food to steed supply'd,

Battering the slimy foil—but o'er the rest

This dire reflection pain'd each wretched breast,

That

That she the witness of their luckless chance
 Would bear the fatal tidings back from France; 860
 And to their queen ador'd the story tell,
 How, the first spear they met at tilt, they fell.
 They now resolv'd to die or heal their shame,
 That so Ulania (such the virgin's name)
 By recent deeds might banish from her thought 865
 What ill effect their late defeat had wrought.

When issuing from the castle they descry'd
 Brave Amon's daughter, each again defy'd
 The generous virgin—Bradamant refus'd
 To accept their joust, but every art they us'd 870
 To fire her ardour, till the martial fair
 No longer could unblam'd the course forbear.
 Her spear she levels, with three strokes she sends
 The three to earth; and thus the contest ends.
 No more she turn'd, but eager to pursue 875
 Her purpos'd journey, vanish'd from their view.

The hapless three who came so far to gain
 The golden shield, rose slowly from the plain,
 While lost in shame, and speechless with surprise,
 Each from Ulania turn'd his downcast eyes. 880
 How oft with her, as from Islanda's coast
 They voyag'd, each had made his haughty boast,

That

That not a knight or Paladin should stand
The least of these in battle hand to hand.
And now the virgin, further to depress 885
Their courage, baffled by their ill success,
And quench their pride, declar'd that not the force
Of knight or Paladin had won the course ;
But that a female arm (in fight renown'd)
Had hurl'd each mighty champion to the ground. 890
What think ye, since a virgin could suffice
To unhorse three knights like you (Urania cries)
Must great Orlando or Rinaldo prove,
So justly held all martial names above ?
Then cease—nor further seek to essay your might, 895
For he, who rashly dares through France invite
A second proof, may rush on greater harms
To blot with new disgrace his boasted arms :
Unless perchance that fate he blest may call,
Which gives him by such valorous hands to fall, 900
She said ; when every squire and damsel near,
Confirm'd a truth each warrior blush'd to hear ;
Such shame, such anguish, every knight impress'd,
As urg'd at first against its master's breast
To turn the steel—and now with frantic haste 905
Each from his limbs the plate and mail unbrac'd ;
Each

Each from his side, ungirt, the falchion drew,
 And in the castle's moat the weapon threw;
 And vow'd one year, despoil'd of arms, to lead
 A life of penance for the shameful deed; 910
 From place to place forlorn on foot to stray
 Through rocky paths, rough hills, or thorny way;
 Nor when the year should run its circling race,
 To mount the courser, or the cuirass lace,
 Unless his valour first should win by force 915
 The shining armour and the warrior-horse.
 And hence on foot at fair Ulania's side
 They pac'd, to punish their o'erweening pride:
 The rest in meet array and glittering splendor ride. }

Now Bradamant to Paris urg'd her way, 920
 And reach'd a castle at declining day,
 Here first the news she heard, that Afric's bands
 Were quell'd by Charles and her brave brother's hands;
 That Afric's king, escap'd the dreadful fight,
 Retir'd to Arli with her much-lov'd knight. 925
 Here treatment fair she met at bed and board,
 But all to her can little ease afford;
 Lost is her appetite for food and rest,
 And gentle peace is banish'd from her breast.

THE
SIXTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

THE ARGUMENT.

BRADAMANT, travelling towards Arli, meets with Flordelis, and hears of the misfortune of Brandimart at Rodomont's bridge: she undertakes to deliver him. Her joust with the Pagan on the bridge. Bradamant arrives with Flordelis at the gates of Arli, and sends a challenge to Rogero. She unhorses, at three several encounters, Serpentino, Grandonio, and Ferrau. While Rogero is preparing to leave the walls of Arli, Marphisa meets Bradamant, and is unhorsed. Distress of Rogero. Skirmish between the Christian and Pagan forces. Rogero entreats a parley with Bradamant, and both the lovers retire from the field of battle into a grove. Marphisa, impatient to revenge her fall on Bradamant, pursues them. Combat between Bradamant and Marphisa. Rogero attempting to part them is attacked by Marphisa. Their combat is broken off by a supernatural event, followed by an interesting discovery.

THE
SIXTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

SOON as the first grey dawn in heaven appear'd,
To rich Provence the dame her journey steer'd;
For thither Charles his conquering legions drew,
(So fame declar'd) the vanquish'd to pursue.

Now near the camp a lonely dame she met, 5
Sighs heav'd her breast, her eyes with tears were wet:
When Bradamant, with heart-felt woes distressed,
This stranger view'd by equal grief oppress'd,
With gentle speech she urg'd her to declare
The secret cause; and thus reply'd the fair. 10

Behold in Flordelis a faithful wife,
Who leads for Brandimart a hopeless life.
When Heaven had wrought the Pagan's overthrow,
And chac'd from Paris' walls th' insulting foe,
Together

Together late Anglante's knight we fought, 15
(His bosom's friend) of manly sense distraught;
And soon we came, where near a crossing flood,
Fierce Rodomont to oppose our passage stood:
Who has not heard of Ulien's dreadful son,
His fatal bridge, his spoils and prisoners won? 20
Here with a thundering voice, in impious pride,
To Brandimart the ruthless Pagan cried.

Whoe'er thou art, by fate or fortune led,
Through error or design, these banks to tread,
Alight—reign thy arms—and yonder tomb 25
Grace with the trophy ere I seal thy doom.

He ended: Brandimart indignant burn'd,
And answer with his spear in rest return'd;
While Rodomont as swift to battle drew,
And o'er the stream with hoofs resounding flew, 30
Trembles the bridge, and to the burthen bends,
The bridge, whose sides nor fence nor rail defends.
Plung'd in the tide, both steeds and riders found
An equal chance—the waves and skies resound.
Down sunk the couriers with the ponderous weight 35
Of either knight, that firmly kept his feat.
Nor this the first, or second venturous leap
The Saracen had prov'd; hence well the deep,

The

The shallows well he knew ; where roll'd the flood
With bottom firm, where soft with ooze and mud. 40
Head, breast, and sides, triumphant o'er the waves
He rears, and now at great advantage braves
My hapless lord, whose courser whirling round,
An eddy buries in the sands profound,
Where deep infix'd, and by no strength releas'd, 45
Certain destruction threatens man and beast.

Ah ! Rodomont—by these fast flowing tears,
By her (I cry'd) whom most thy soul reveres,
Permit not thus, by such inglorious death,
So true, so brave a knight to yield his breath. 50
Ah ! courteous lord—if e'er thy heart could love,
Think what for him my bleeding heart must prove.
Suffice that now he bears thy captive chain ;
Suffice with thee his arms and vest remain ;
And know, of all by right of conquest thine, 55
No nobler spoils adorn the virgin shrine.

I said, and such persuasive words address'd,
As touch'd the cruel king's obdurate breast :
But ere the Pagan would his aid afford,
He took from Brandimart his helm and sword, 60
Then drew my knight half lifeless to the shore,
And clos'd, with numbers, in the marble tower.

When thus I saw my lord a prisoner led,
All hope and comfort from my bosom fled.
Departing thence, I ponder'd long in mind, 65
Some gallant chief of Pepin's court to find;
Who, though not bolder than my own true knight,
With fortune more his friend, might wage the fight.
If thou, sir knight ! (pursu'd the weeping fair)
Art brave and courteous, as thy looks declare, 70
For Heaven's dear sake ! on him thy valour turn,
Through whom I thus my lord, my champion mourn;
Or teach me, in what near or distant land,
To meet with one yon Pagan to withstand;
With one, whose courage can my foe assail, 75
That little shall his bridge and stream avail.
Not only shalt thou act as suits the right
Of chivalry, as fits a wandering knight;
But more—thy valour shall maintain the cause
Of one unchang'd to Love's all-ruling laws. 80
How shall my lips his nameless virtues tell,
The nameless virtues that his sex excel?
Who own not these must breasts unfeeling prove,
Which neither faith can touch, nor worth can move.
Fair love-lorn stranger (Bradamant replies) 85
Such as I am, this arm thy foe defies.

Thou

Thou speak'st thy **lover** loyal to his vows,
 When truth to few so **high** a praise allows :
 'Till now I deem'd who dar'd in man to trust,
 Would find in love all perjur'd and unjust. 90

Thus she ; and as the latter words she spoke,
 A sigh spontaneous from her bosom broke.
 Lead on—she cry'd ; and with th' ensuing day
 They view'd the fatal stream and dangerous way :
 There soon discover'd by the watch, who stood, 95
 To warn his lord what strangers reach'd the flood,
 The horn is blown ; the Pagan, arm'd with speed,
 Stands on the shore oppos'd with spear and steed,
 To guard the pass ; and when the dame he spies,
 Denounces instant death with threatening cries, 100
 Unless she yields, to avert her threaten'd doom,
 Her horse and armour offer'd at the tomb.
 But Bradamant, before instructed well,
 Who heard fair Flordelis th' adventure tell,
 How by his frenzy Isabella dy'd, 105
 Thus to the haughty Saracen reply'd.

Why, wretch ! should those who ne'er partook thy
 guilt,

Be punish'd for the blood thy rage has spilt ?
 By thee she fell—thy life should here atone
 That impious deed through every region known. 110

Thy life were here a better victim paid
In just oblation to her virgin shade;
More grateful far than all the trophies won
From luckless knights that on this bridge have run.
Her ghost must prize the vengeance best, that came
From one, who bears like her, a woman's name: 116
A woman see—but ere in joust we meet,
On equal terms together let us treat.
Should'st thou in fight prevail, my fate with those
Already taken, at thy will dispose: 120
But (as I deem) on me should conquest light,
Thy horse, thy armour, shall be mine of right:
My hand shall yonder arms and mail displace,
And, in their stead, shall thine the marble grace:
Thy prisoners shall be mine.—'Tis just (reply'd 125
Stern Rodomont) nor is thy claim deny'd:
Though should'st thou win, thou canst not now restore
My vanquish'd prisoners sent to Afric's shore.
But here I swear, should'st thou thy feat retain
By some strange chance, and I unhors'd remain, 130
Each Christian shall be freed, by our command
Dispatch'd in message swift to Afric's land.
Yet should'st thou fall when we in fight contend,
(As surely thus the contest soon must end)

Thou

Thou shalt not leave thy arms, nor shall thy name, 135
Grav'd on the marble, thy defeat proclaim :
To that fair face, those locks, and sparkling eyes,
Already vanquish'd, I resign my prize.
Thine be the day—so may'st thou but remove
Each angry thought, and change thy hate to love : 140
Such is my strength, my courage, known to all,
Thou need'st not deem it shame by me to fall.

The virgin smil'd, but sternly smiling shew'd
A generous wrath that in her features glow'd,
Nor to the Pagan aught reply'd again, 145
But turning to the bridge her courser's rein,
Urg'd all his speed, while in her hand she bore
The lance of gold to charge the furious Moor. ,
Fierce Rodomont prepar'd the joust to meet,
Rapid he came : beneath their coursers' feet 150
The tough bridge shook, while many an ear around
At distance trembled with the deafening sound,
The golden lance its wonted virtue held,
And he, whose arm so oft his foes had quell'd,
Swift on the bridge was tumbled from his seat, 155
His head laid low, high rais'd his quivering feet.
Scarce could the virgin, as the warrior lay,
Speed o'er the narrow pass her courser's way.

Then to the Pagan king, supinely spread,
 She turn'd, and thus in sportive humour said: 160
 Behold who now has lost—see whither tends
 Thy empty boast, and how the contest ends!

Foiled by a woman's hand, without reply,
 Depriv'd of sense, the Pagan seem'd to lie,
 Till slowly rising, with dejected look, 165
 A few short steps with silent gaze he took,
 Then sudden from his limbs the armour drew,
 And fill'd with rage against the marble threw:
 Alone, on foot, he hasten'd from the place
 (The scene detested of his foul disgrace) 170

But ere he went, he gave a squire in charge,
 To Afric sent, to set the knights at large,
 As late he vow'd; nor more the muse shall tell,
 Save that departing thence he turn'd to dwell
 From living haunts in some sequester'd cell. 175

Meantime against the monumental stone,
 The Pagan's mail, by law of arms her own,
 Aloft the virgin hung; but thence remov'd
 Each Christian's armour that the joust had prov'd.
 Beside the arms of Monodantes' son, 180
 With Sanfonetto's, Olivero's shone;

Whom,

Whom, while Aglante's noble prince * they fought,
 Their luckless fortune to the Pagan brought;
 And, here made captive by his powerful hand,
 Were hapless exiles sent to Afric's land. 185
 All other harness won, the conquer'd spoil
 From Pagan knights, she left to deck the pile.
 There hung the warrior's arms who fought in vain,
 With length of peril, Frontalet to gain;
 Those arms, which late Circassia's monarch † wore, 190
 Who wandering many a plain and mountain o'er,
 By evil chance to lose his steed arriv'd,
 And travell'd thence of horse and arms depriv'd.

Each Christian name eras'd, the martial maid
 In words new graven on the tomb, display'd 195
 To every passing eye her glorious deed,
 The knight dismounted and the passage freed;
 Then turn'd to Flordelis, whose heart was fill'd
 With tender grief, whose eyes big tears distill'd,
 And ask'd her purpos'd way: The dame replies: 200
 To Arli, where the Pagan army lies:
 Companions there I seek, there hope to find
 A bark for Afric with a favouring wind:
 Ne'er will I rest till to my eyes restor'd,
 These arms receive my husband and my lord. 205

* ORLANDO.

† SACRIPANT.

Behold me ready (said the martial fair)
With thee each peril of the way to share,
Till Arli's walls we reach, where, for my sake,
Within her gate thy entrance shalt thou make:
There seek Rogero, fam'd through every land, 210,
Lov'd of his king o'er all the martial band:
On him, my gift, this gallant steed bestow,
From which I late o'erthrew our haughty foe:
Then shalt thou say—"The knight from whom I
came

"Dares to the world thy breach of faith proclaim; 215

"To thee this steed he sends, and bids thee brace

"Thy arms, his force on yonder plain to face."

Here end thy speech; but should he further try

To learn my name, be this thy sole reply:

"Unknown to me the knight whose words I bear."

Thus she—and thus return'd the grateful fair; 221

What danger, generous virgin, for thy sake

Shall I decline, what toil refuse to take?

My life is thine—Not less than life she owes

To thee, who could for her thy own expose. 225

Along the margin of the winding flood
These beauteous dames their eager way purfu'd,
Till Arli they beheld, and heard the roar
Of billows breaking on the neighbouring shore.

Here

Here Bradamant her courser check'd, to wait 230

Herself at distance from the city's gate,

Till Flordelis to Arli should repair,

And to the noble youth his courser bear.

The knight she found, perform'd her task enjoin'd,

And good Frontino to his hand consign'd. 235

Her message done, the neighbouring port she fought,

In hope to find a bark for Afric fraught.

Perplex'd Rogero stood, his mind confus'd,

On this, on that, in vain alternate mus'd :

What knight could such mysterious challenge send, 240

With gifts to court him, and with arms offend ?

Meanwhile Dordona's dame, with noble scorn,

To claim the combat, blows her founding horn.

Now Agramant, and now Marsilius heard

That near the walls some champion strange appear'd :

With these, as chance befel, a gallant knight, 246

Call'd Serpentino, stood, who for the fight

Requested leave to arm, and vow'd to bring

That bold unknown in bonds before the king.

Soon spreading rumour to the ramparts drew 250

Each sex and every age, the field to view :

Not feeble years, nor childhood stay'd, but all

Alike impatient throng'd to line the wall.

With

With radiant arms, and rich embroider'd vest,
 King Serpentino of the star address'd 255
 His dauntless course, and entering on the joust,
 The first encounter stretch'd him in the dust.
 The courteous dame pursu'd, and by the reins
 Secur'd his steed, that startled fled the plains :
 Him to the Saracen her hand restor'd : 260
 Resume thy feat (she cry'd) and bid thy lord
 Select another warrior from his band
 Who better may in arms my force withstand.

The king of Afric saw with wide survey,
 Amidst his train, the fortune of the day : 265
 Behold (th' enraptur'd prince exclaim'd aloud,
 In accents heard by all the Pagan crowd)
 Yon gallant chief a victor's right forego,
 And from the plain dismiss his vanquish'd foe!
 He said; when Serpentino present stands, 270
 And, in her name, a braver knight demands.
 Grandonio of Volterna next appears;
 (No lord of Spain his crest so proudly rears)
 With leave obtain'd the second course to try,
 He issues forth the stranger to defy. 275
 Then he—Thy courtesy avails thee nought,
 When thou in bonds before our sovereign brought
 Shalt

Shalt wait his nod, or by my weapon slain
 Here stretch thy length on this contested plain.
 Think not my soul (the generous maid reply'd) 280
 Shall quit her purpose for the threats of pride :
 I warn thee to retire, ere vanquish'd here
 Thy batter'd limbs confess my stronger spear.
 Return, return—and to thy king declare,
 'Tis not for such as thee these arms I bear : 285
 But hither am I come to meet in fight
 Some warrior that deserves a warrior's might.

These bitter words, in taunting vein address'd,
 With burning wrath inflam'd the Pagan's breast :
 He nought reply'd, but reining round his steed 290
 Against the virgin urg'd his fiery speed.
 Prepar'd to joust, her golden lance she held,
 And Rabican to meet his rage impell'd ;
 When scarce the fatal weapon touch'd his shield,
 With spurning heels aloft, he press'd the field. 295
 The noble champions his courser stay'd :
 Confess that justly I foretold (she said)
 Thy tongue might better far my message bear,
 Than in the list thy arm my weapon dare.
 Go then—and in my name thy king entreat 300
 To chuse a knight that may my challenge meet

On

On better terms ; nor let me toil in vain
With those that knightly fame so ill sustain.

The gazers from the walls, who wish'd to tell
What brave unknown had kept his feat so well, 305
Recall'd to mind each chief, that oft in field
Midst summer's heat their blood with fear congeal'd.
To Brandimart some gave the champion's claim,
But to Rinaldo more ascrib'd his fame :
Orlando most had nam'd, but well they knew 310
His state, that tears from every hearer drew.

The third in turn, Lanfusa's son *, apply'd
To run the course ; with little hope (he cry'd)
To win the palm, but, falling, that his shame
Might with his friends unhors'd partake the blame.
And furnish'd now with all that warriors need 316
In equal fight, he mounts a fiery steed,
Led from a thousand which his stalls contain,
For swiftness priz'd and steady to the rein.
He issues forth, but ere in joust he meets, 320
The virgin him, and he the virgin greets :
Then she—If this thou seek'st not to conceal,
To me in courtesy thy name reveal,
To her request Ferrau in full reply'd,
Who seldom fought himself or deeds to hide. 325

* FERRAU,

Thy

Thy proffer'd joust I take (rejoin'd the dame)
Though here to prove another knight I came.
What knight? return'd Ferrau—to whom the maid
Rogero cry'd—and scarce the word she said,
When o'er her face the mantling colour flew, 330
And dy'd her lovely cheeks to crimson hue :
She thus pursu'd—That warrior's fame in arms
My beating breast with emulation warms :
Eager I burn with him in field to wage
The single fight, and front to front engage. 335

To her Ferrau—Be first our conflict try'd,
The prize of strength between us first decide :
Then, should I fall, as fell my peers before ;
To heal the chance of this disastrous hour,
That gentle knight shall enter next the course, 340
With whom thou long'st at tilt to prove thy force.

As thus they parlying stood, her helm unclos'd,
Her visage to the wondering gaze expos'd ;
And while Ferrau those angel features view'd,
His heart confess'd him more than half subdu'd. 345
Then to himself—A form I sure behold
From Paradise, not fram'd of mortal mould ;
And should I fail in joust the lance to meet,
Those conquering eyes have wrought my sure defeat.

Each

Each measur'd now the ground, when, like the rest,
Ferrau, o'erthrown, the earth indignant press'd. 351

For him his courser Bradamant detain'd:

Return (she cry'd) and be my wish explain'd

To yonder knight. Ferrau abash'd, withdrew,

Before the king, amidst his courtly crew,

Rogero fought, the haughty message told,

That him to joust defy'd the champion bold.

Rogero, while as yet he little thought

What unknown knight with him the combat fought,

As sure of conquest, with a fearless air 360

Bade all his armour for the field prepare:

Still glow'd his courage, though so late he view'd

Three warriors by a single spear subdu'd.

All now enquir'd what champion could so well,

With pointed javelin, in the fight excel. 365

Securely rest (Lanfusa's son rejoin'd),

No tongue has yet this pride of Mars divin'd.

To me he seem'd, as first his face I view'd,

Amon's young hope; but when the joust ensu'd,

And shew'd his prowess in the manly course, 370.

Not such I knew was Richardetto's force:

His sister hence yon knight unknown I deem,

Whose semblant features Richardetto seem.

Brave as Rinaldo lives her fair report,
Brave as each Paladin of Gallia's court ; 375
But sure, by this day's proof, her arm in fight
Transcends her brethren's and her kinsmen's might.

When this Rogero heard, the deepening red
Of morning blush his conscious cheeks o'erspread ;
A sudden tremor seiz'd his beating heart, 380
Swift through his vitals flew the amorous dart :
He glows—he burns—and now as fear assails,
Through all his bones an icy cold prevails :
He dreads some new-born anger has suppress'd
The love that once her gentle soul possess'd : 385
Divided thoughts by turns his bosom sway,
He doubts to go, nor yet resolves to stay.

Meantime Marphisa, breathing martial fires,
There present stands, and to the joust aspires,
All clad in steel ; for seldom day or night 390
She stood without her mail and corset bright.
She sees Rogero arm, and fears to yield
To him the foremost honours of the field :
Her steed she takes, and vaulting in the seat,
Impatient spurs the Dordan dame to meet, 395
Who waits with beating heart Rogero's fight,
In hopes to hold in bonds her faithless knight ;

While

While oft she ponders where the lance to bend,
That least in combat might the youth offend.

Now from the portal fierce Marphisa press'd, 400
The phoenix towering on her radiant crest,
To prove that she, above each martial name,
Shone the sole phoenix in the field of fame ;
Or boast her chaste design to lead a life
Estrang'd from love and all the joys of wife. 405

On her brave Amon's daughter bent her view ;
But when no semblance of her knight she knew,
Her name she sought ; her name disclos'd the maid
For whom she deem'd her constant faith betray'd ;
Her whom she loath'd, on whom she burn'd to prove
The vengeance due to wrongs of slighted love. 411
Her steed she turn'd, again with fury wheel'd,
Nor sought to hurl Marphisa on the field,
But through her breast to drive the thrilling spear,
And free her own from every jealous fear. 415

Marphisa tumbled headlong from her seat ;
But, fill'd with wrath and shame at such defeat,
Swift rising from the ground, her sword she drew,
And for revenge against her victor flew ;
When Amon's daughter, with indignant pride— 420
Thou art my prisoner ! yield thy arms (she cry'd) ;

Think

Think not on thee, Marphisa, I'll bestow
The grace I lately show'd each vanquish'd foe ;
On thee, whose deeds thy recreant soul proclaim;
Reproach and scandal to the female name ! 425

At this Marphisa foam'd, as 'mid the waves
Around some rock the wind indignant raves :
She strives to speak ; but rage her voice confounds,
And her lips mutter undistinguish'd sounds.

She whirls her sword ; and while she aims to strike,
On steed and rider aims her strokes alike. 431

But Bradamant her courser by the rein
Swift wheeling round, with wrath and fell disdain
Again her spear impell'd—her spear anew
Marphisa backward on the sand o'erthrew. 435

Once more from earth arose the wrathful maid,
Once more for vengeance grasp'd her beamy blade.
Again her weapon Bradamant extends,
Again Marphisa to the ground she sends.

And now a band of Christian warriors, near 440
Encamp'd to where with brandish'd sword and spear
These heroines rag'd, beheld with wondering sight
Th' exalted prowess of their country knight :
Nor other, by his mien and arms they knew,
Than for some warrior of the faithful crew. 445

Soon as Troyano's generous son survey'd
The Christians bending tow'ards th' extended shade
Of Arli's walls ; still cautious to provide
For every ill or chance that might betide ;
Without the gates he bids a squadron go, 450
And arm'd attend the motions of the foe.

With these Rogero came, who late prepar'd
To meet the joust which first Marphisa dar'd.
He shook with terror for his soul's delight,
Since well he knew Marphisa's force in fight. 455
Such were his fears when first with lance oppos'd
The warlike dames with mutual fury clos'd ;
But when the issue of the strife he view'd,
All motionless in wonder rapt he stood.
Rogero gaz'd, and gaz'd with anxious heart, 460
His doubts, his hopes engag'd on either part :
Both dear he held : this love's fierce passion fir'd ;
And that mild friendship's gentler flame inspir'd.
Fain would he see the hated conflict cease,
But honour's laws forbade to enforce the peace : 465
Not so his comrades thought, who when they spy'd
The scale of conquest on the Christian side,
Resolv'd to part the fray ; and sudden wheel'd
Their eager forces to dispute the field ;

The knights of Charles their nearer course oppose, 470
And soon in general fight the squadrons close.

"To arms, to arms!" is heard on every hand,
Such cries as daily rous'd each martial band.

These mount their couriers, those their weapons take:
The rattling trumpets to the battle wake 475

The trampling horse; while drums and timbrels join
To fire the foot, and form each deepening line.

Fierce and more fierce the skirmish'd troops engage
With mutual slaughter and with mutual rage.

Dordona's valiant dame *, who hop'd in vain 480
To see Marphisa by her weapon slain,

With wrath beholds her eager vengeance cross'd,
And from her hand the hated victim lost.

Now here, now there, with quick exploring eyes
She seeks Rogero, for whose sake she fights; 485

And soon she knows him by his targe reveal'd,
The silver eagle on an azure field;

And now, with every tender thought impress'd,

She marks his well-turn'd limbs, his manly breast;
Each grace, each action of the youthful knight, 490

On which she oft had gaz'd with fond delight.

But when her thoughts suggest those manly charms
Were doom'd to fill some happier virgin's arms,

• BRADAMANT.

M 2

Furious

Furious she cries—Am I deny'd the bliss,
When other lips those balmy lips may kiss? 495
Ah! never sure another's shalt thou prove,
And, scorning mine, return a rival's love!
Rather than singly by thy hate expire,
This hand, inhuman, shall thy life require;
If here I lose thee—death at least shall join 500
Our hearts once more, and make thee ever mine.
If by thy sword I fall, thou sure must go
A willing victim to the shades below;
For human laws, and laws divine ordain,
Who slays another shall himself be slain. 505
Nor canst thou murmur here, nor seek to fly
That fate thou justly meet'st, unjustly I:
I kill but him who seeks my life to take,
Thou, cruel, her who lives but for thy sake.
Rouse, coward hand, and with a righteous blow 510
Lay bare the bosom of thy treacherous foe,
Whose looks, in love's dissembled smiles array'd,
Have wounded oft to death a helpless maid!
Who now can bid my life's sad period close
Without one pang in pity to my woes! 515
She said; and to her steed the spurs apply'd—
Perjur'd Rogero! guard thy heart! (she cry'd)

Think

Think not, unquestion'd, victor hence to bear
 The glorious trophies of a maid's despair!
 Rogero, midst a thousand tongues, confess'd 520
 That voice so deeply on his mind imprest;
 He thinks her words conceal'd reproach imply
 For some imputed crime of deeper dye
 Than late his promise fail'd; and hence his hand
 He wav'd, a friendly audience to demand, 525
 And plead his cause—but she with beaver clos'd,
 Her spear already in the rest dispos'd.

When now he saw the furious virgin near,
 Collected in his arms, his ponderous spear
 He plac'd in rest, but rais'd the point in air, 530
 Through doubt to wound the lov'd but cruel fair.
 The dame, who with unpitying rage inflam'd,
 Against the knight her fiercest vengeance aim'd,
 Now feels a sudden power her wrath disarm,
 Nor dares unhorse him, nor the warrior harm. 535
 Thus guiltless of a stroke their weapons prove,
 Both turn'd aside: not so the shaft of Love;
 This the blind archer drove with matchless art,
 And fix'd the amorous point in either's heart.
 The dame on others from Rogero turn'd 540
 The rage that in her jealous bosom burn'd,

And 'midst the tumult of the mingled fight,
Such deeds perform'd as ne'er shall set in night.

Soon with her golden lance to earth she threw
Three hundred warriors of the Moorish crew: 545
Her single arm that day the ranks defac'd;
Her force that day the flying Pagans chac'd.
Now here, now there, Rogero cours'd the plain,
And oft he sought to accost the fair in vain;
At length they met—And O! I die—(he cry'd) 550
Yet hear—nor be my sole request deny'd;
Grant me to speak—alas! what crime is mine?
Why dost thou thus my speech, my sight decline?

As, when the balmy southern wind prevails,
And o'er the ocean sweeps with tepid gales, 555
Long-frozen streams dissolve, and mingling flow
With rocks of ice, and hills of crusted snow:
So when Rinaldo's valiant sister hears
These few short words, and sees her lover's tears,
Her melting heart relents, and seems no more 560
That heart which wrath to marble chang'd before.

The virgin to Rogero nought reply'd,
But gor'd with iron heel her courser's side;
And swiftly turning from the warring band,
She made a signal with her beckoning hand, 565
Far

Far from the throng she reach'd a vale, where stood
Amidst a verdant plain a cypress wood,
Whose sable boughs extended o'er the glade
The solemn honours of coeval shade.
In this sequester'd place, this awful gloom, 570
Of purest marble rose a stately tomb;
Where to th' enquiring eye was seen disclos'd
In sculptur'd verse what body there repos'd:
But Bradamant, arriv'd, with heedless gaze
Alike the sculpture and the stone surveys. 575
Roger o spur'd his steed, and swiftly came
In this retreat to join his virgin-dame.

To brave Marphisa let us turn the strain,
Who, now recovering, press'd her steed again,
And fought the warlike maid, whose potent thrust 580
Had thrice her length extended on the dust;
Whom parting from the fight afar she view'd,
And saw Roger, who her course pursu'd;
Nor deem'd that love impell'd the youthful knight,
But eager warmth to end th' unfinish'd fight. 585
With sharpen'd spur her fiery steed she drove,
And join'd the lovers, as they reach'd the grove;
But Bradamant was fir'd with rage to view
The imputed cause of all the woes she knew:

O false Rogero ! (once again she cries) 590

Perfidious man ! and could not yet suffice

Thy broken faith, but thou in fell despite

Must bring yon hated gorgon to my sight !

I see thy wish, to drive me from thy foul,

Nor will I more thy cruel wish control : 595

Farewell to life !—but ere I yield my breath,

She first shall die, by whom I meet my death.

Furious she spoke ; and on Marphisa press'd
With more than viper's venom in her breast ;

Soon as her spear had touch'd the rival-shield, 600

Back fell Marphisa helpless on the field ;

Even while aware, to oppose the stroke she tries,

With heels retorted to the radiant skies,

And helm half sunk in earth, the haughty virgin lies. }

But Amøn's daughter, who, in frantic mood, 605
Resolv'd to die or shed Marphisa's blood,

No more with spear the conflict would renew,

But from her hand th' enchanted weapon threw,

And leaping from the steed her falchion drew. }

Eager she rush'd to lop with trenchant blade 610

Her head, half-buried, from the struggling maid :

But ere she came, Marphisa on the plain

Recover'd stood to wage the fight again,

Enrag'd

Enrag'd to find once more in equal joust,
Her former glories humbled to the dust. 615
With grief Rogero views the growing fight;
In vain with earnest prayers the gentle knight
Would calm their souls; all peace the dames refuse,
While each alike her mad revenge pursues.
Now, at half-sword, these female warriors close, 620
Near and more near they press, each bosom glows
With tenfold pride; and now together join'd,
Each round her foe a powerful arm has twin'd;
They let their falchions useless fall to ground,
And with their daggers aim a fatal wound. 625
To both by turns Rogero bends his prayer,
But all his words are lost in empty air.
Entreaties vain, and every milder art,
The youth resolves by force their strife to part:
He wrests the dagger from each struggling maid, 630
And hurls the weapon in the cypress shade.
Their hands disarm'd, he steps between their rage,
With threats to move them, or with prayers assuage;
In vain—his prayers and threats alike prevail,
Still burns their wrath, and when their weapons fail,
They gripe, they squeeze, they strike with spurning
heel, 636
And with their gauntlets clench'd the tempest deal.

Of by her hand or arm the gentle knight
 Each virgin draws to interrupt the fight;
 Till stern Marphisa could no more control 640

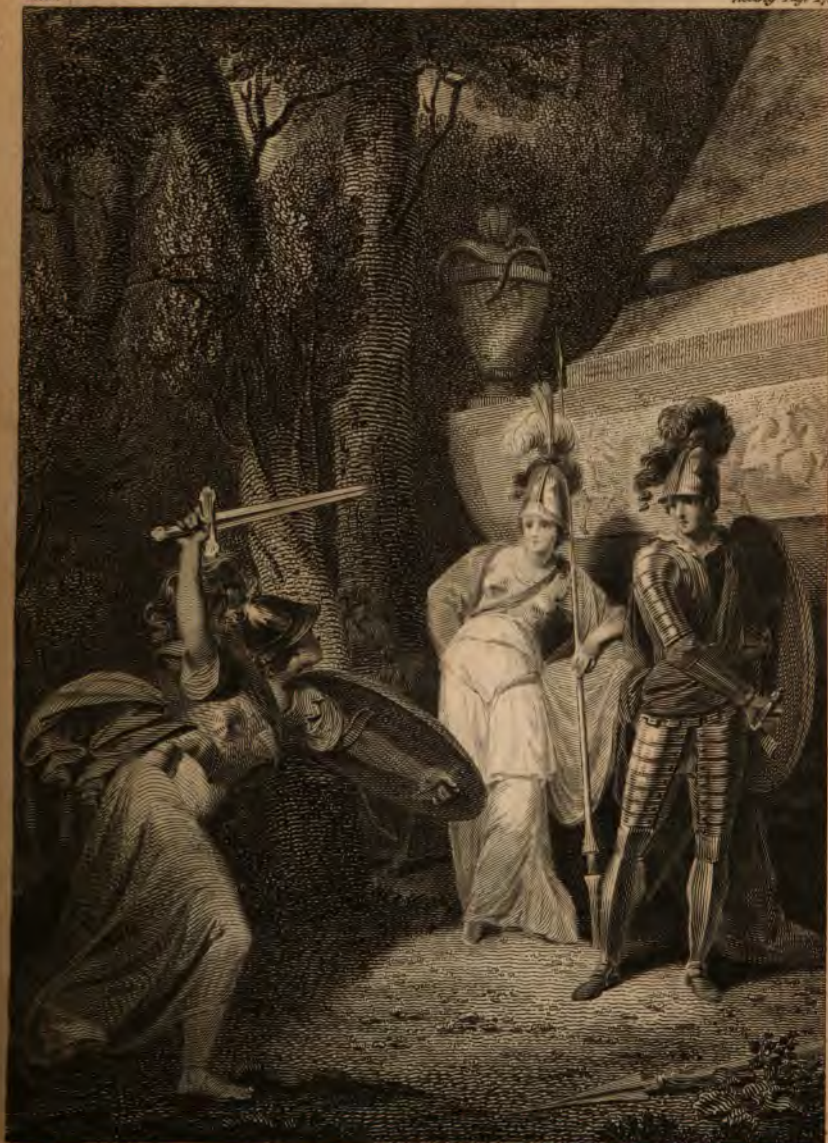
The impatience kindling in her haughty soul,
 That haughty soul which all the world despis'd,
 As little now Rogero's friendship priz'd:

But, leaving Bradamant, her sword she took,
 Rush'd on Rogero, and indignant spoke. 645

O insolent of mind! discourteous knight!
 Uncall'd to mingle in another's fight—
 But know, this hand thy folly shall chastise,
 This hand whose single weapon both defies.

Thus she : with balm of soothing words address'd, 650
 Rogero still would touch Marphisa's breast:
 But such her rage, no soothing can control
 The stubborn purpose of her fiery soul,
 At length, his cheek with rising anger dy'd,
 The knight unsheaths the falchion from his side. 655
 Not Rome or Athens, once with riches crown'd,
 Nor wealthier city, through the world renown'd,
 Could on the gazer such delight bestow,
 With dazzling splendors of some public show,
 As now, to jealous Bradamant, the fight 660
 Of deadly strife between the dame and knight;

A fight





A fight that to her grief sure med'cine prov'd,
And every pang of cruel doubt remov'd.
She snatch'd her sword, that on the herbage lay,
And stood a glad spectatress of the fray. 665
Rogero in his force, his martial air,
And matchless skill, she deem'd the God of war:
But while like Mars he seem'd, with vengeance fell,
Marphisa look'd a fiend from deepest hell.
Yet still the generous warrior would restrain 670
His wonted nerve, nor give his wrath the rein:
Too well the virtue of his blade he knew,
That oft, in battle prov'd, such numbers slew;
And hence his wary hand declin'd alike
With thrilling point to thrust, with edge to strike. 675
At length the virgin aim'd a dreadful blow,
That rous'd to sudden wrath her gentle foe:
To cleave his head the thundering steel she drove;
Against the weapon, hissing from above,
Rogero rais'd his eagle-painted shield, 680
And caught the fury on its azure field:
And had not Hector's mail the falchion stay'd,
Thro' plate and mail had driven the trenchant blade.
Rogero scarce can lift his arm with pain,
And scarce his eagle's ponderous orb sustain. 685
All

All pity fled, his bosom glow'd with ire,
And either eye-ball flash'd vindictive fire !
Then at full force he whirl'd the pointed steel,
Ill chance were hers the direful stroke to feel :
Some guardian power was near to save the maid, 690
And in a cypress bark the erring blade
Sunk deep infix'd, where thickly planted stood
Of mournful trees the venerable wood.
Sudden a fearful earthquake rock'd the ground ;
The meadow shook, the mountain trembled round :
When from the tomb, in central silence rear'd, 696
A sound, exceeding mortal sounds, was heard.

Then thus the voice of horror—O ! forbear
This impious strife, this most unnatural war,
Where brother's hands a sister seek to kill, 700
Where sister's hands a brother's blood would spill.
O lov'd Rogero ! lov'd Marphisa, hear !
For both are mine—O lend a heedful ear !
One womb conceiv'd you both, one happy birth
Produc'd you both, the future boasts of earth. 705
Your sire, Rogero, second of the name,
Lov'd Galacella, who return'd his flame :
But him, alas ! her cruel brethren gave
An early victim to th' untimely grave ;

And

And mindless of the dear, the precious load 710
Your mother bore, unheeding kindred blood,
Her in a slender bark these fiends consign'd
To threatening death amid the seas and wind.
But Fortune that decreed you, yet unborn,
With glorious deeds your country to adorn, 715
The vessel to a realm unpeopled bore,
And safe conducted to the Syrtes' shore.
Eas'd of her birth, to death your parent bends,
Her spotless soul to Paradise ascends.
But such your fate, so will'd some favouring power,
Myself was present at the needful hour: 721
Then (as the place allow'd) this pious hand
Interr'd your mother on the lonely strand:
Wrapt in my vest your tender limbs I laid,
And to Carena's towering height convey'd. 725
I caus'd a gentle lioness to come,
Her whelps deserting, from the woodland gloom;
Who twice ten months (her native rage subdu'd)
From savage teat supply'd your milky food.
But rovnig o'er the fields one fatal day, 730
As distant from my home I chanc'd to stray,
On you a band of Arab spoilers fell,
(Your memory may supply the tale I tell)

Marphisa,

Marphisa, thee they seiz'd ; with feet more light
 By better chance Rogero 'scap'd by flight. 735
 Return'd, your cruel loss I long deplore,
 But guard my sole remaining hope the more.
 Thou know'st, Rogero, well my ceaseless care,
 While sad Atlantes breath'd this vital air.
 I read in boding skies thy doom, decreed 740
 In Christian lands by treacherous guile to bleed ;
 For this I strove to keep thee thence afar
 To evade the influence of each threatening star :
 But when thy ardour all my hopes oppos'd,
 My wretched days with grief and sickness clos'd. 745
 Yet ere I died, where my prophetic sight
 Here with Marphisa long foretold thy fight,
 I call'd the demons from Tartarean gloom
 With marbles heap'd to raise this stately tomb ;
 And with loud cries to Charon thus I pray'd : 750
 " Awhile forbear to claim my mournful shade !
 " Though freed from life, permit my ghost to stray
 " In this drear grove, till that predestin'd day,
 " When my Rogero, in this lone retreat,
 " In single combat shall a sister meet." 755
 O Bradamant, by our Rogero lov'd,
 Henceforth be every jealous thought remov'd !—

But

But now, farewell ! farewell to chearful light,
I sink for ever in eternal night !

Here ceas'd the voice ; and ceasing left imprest 760
Fear, wonder, love, in every hearer's breast.
The knight Marphisa for his sister knew ;
She, in Rogero, with enraptur'd view
Her brother own'd ; and both with pious haste
Advancing in each other's arms embrac'd ; 765
While she, whose soul no more with doubts was mov'd,
Shar'd in their meeting, and their joy approv'd.
Now recollection, waking many a thought,
The time long past to their remembrance brought,
And, while in safety by Atlantes bred, 770
The sports in which their childish years they led.
Rogero to his sister now reveal'd
What love his heart for Bradamant conceal'd ;
And, with affection's warmest glow, display'd
The ties that bound him to the generous maid : 775
Meantime fell discord, late a cruel guest,
Was banish'd far from either virgin's breast,
And both, to peace and amity dispos'd,
Their friendly arms around each other clos'd.
Marphisa now impatient burns to enquire 780
The state and birth of their illustrious sire ;

By

By whom he fell, and how the chief was slain,
In single fight, or on th' embattled plain :
What impious hands their hapless mother gave
A guiltless victim to the greedy wave : 785
If e'er the tale had reach'd her infant ears,
The trace was scarce retain'd in lapse of years.

Rogero then began : From Ilium's coast,
Through Hector's mighty line our race we boast.
When young Astyanax had fled the bands 790
Of Grecian foes, and 'scap'd Ulysses' hands,
Long wandering o'er the spacious seas he gain'd
Sicilia's isle, and in Messina reign'd.
From him a race in long succession came ;
And midst unnumber'd chiefs of mighty fame, 795
A second brave Rogero rose, who led
Our honour'd mother to the nuptial bed.

Rogero then declar'd, from Afric's shore
How Agolant his double offspring bore
Almontes and Troyano ; how he brought 800
A daughter, who in arms so bravely fought,
That many a Paladin to earth she threw ;
Till of their fire the fair enamour'd grew :
That for his sake her father she forsook,
And how, baptiz'd, his hand in marriage took. 805
How

How Agolant and his dire fons combin'd
 (When billows dash'd, when howl'd the raging wind)
 Unhappy Galatella's death to doom,
 Six moons beholding then her growing womb ;
 And how her feeble skiff, without a guide, 810
 They launch'd at mercy of the roaring tide.

When brave Marphisa heard the cruel brood
 Of Agramant had shed Rogero's blood
 By treacherous guile, and doom'd his blameless wife
 On surgy tides to end her wretched life ; 815
 No more the sister could her wrath disguise,
 But thus abrupt—O brother lov'd ! (she cries)
 Forgive me, if I gently must complain
 That you, a son, could filial warmth restrain,
 And unreveng'd behold a father slain ! 820

What though Almontes and Troyano, fled
 From mortal state, are shelter'd with the dead,
 Thy justice may the son of life deprive—
 Thou liv'st—and yet shall Agramant survive ?
 Now by that Power whom henceforth I'll adore, 825
 That Power to whom my father bow'd before,
 I swear this armour never to forsake,
 Till for my parents' wrongs revenge I take.
 Griev'd I behold, and ever shall behold,
 Rogero's force with Agramant enroll'd, 830

Or mix'd with Moors, unless with sword in hand
To scatter slaughter through their hated band.

While from Marphisa's lips these accents flow'd,
The heart of Bradamant with rapture glow'd,
And oft she urg'd her lover to pursue 835
The path Marphisa pointed out to view,
And seeking Charles, assert his rightful claim
To lineal honours from his father's fame.

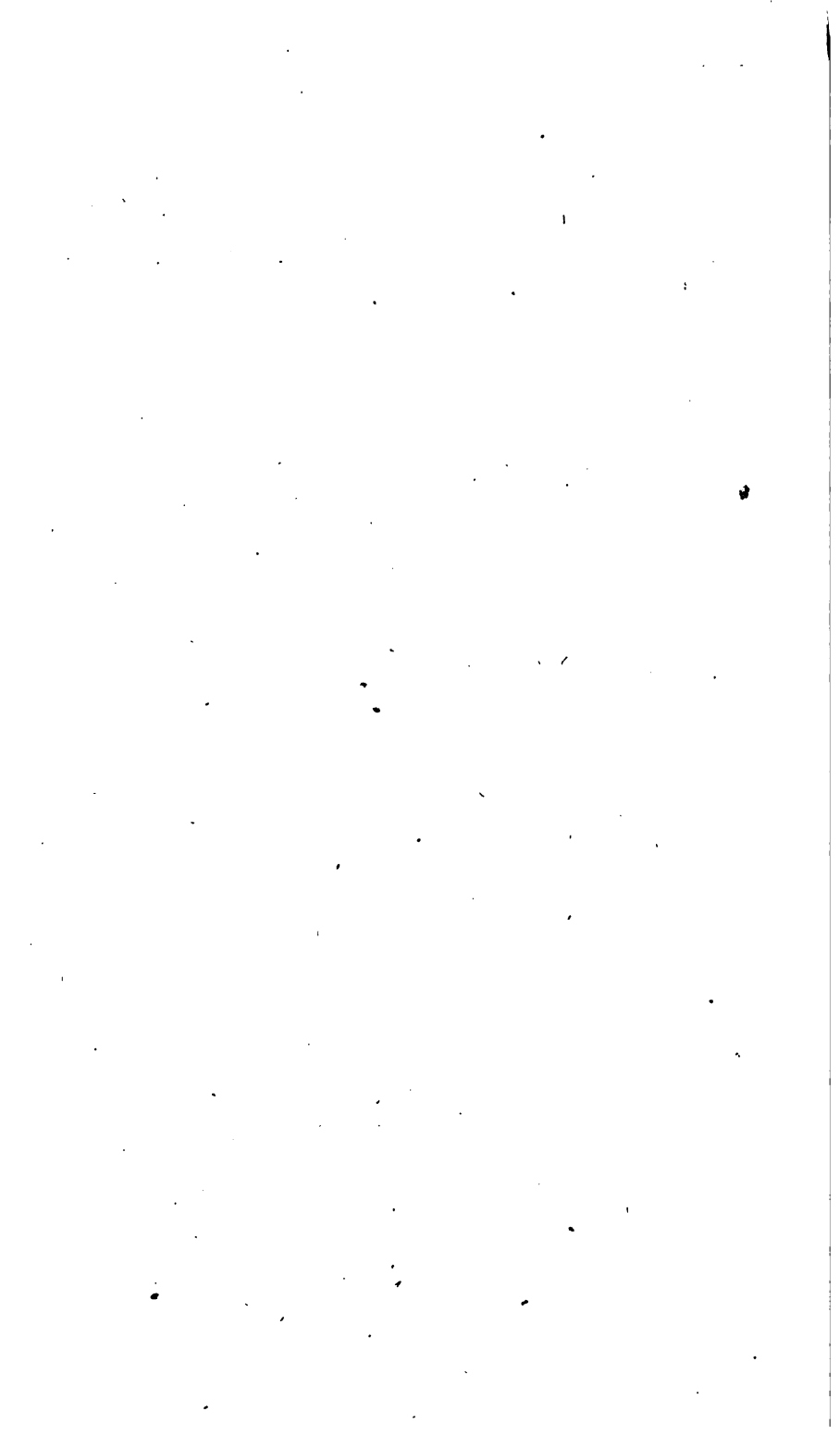
To them Rogero courteous thus reply'd:
He long ere this had left the Pagan's side, 840
Had all been known, or known been duly weigh'd;
But since from Agramant the martial blade
Now grac'd his thigh, on him that sword to raise,
With treason's guilt would stain his former praise;
To shed his blood whom for his lord he chose, 845
And pledg'd the faith of knight to guard him from his
foes.

Yet, as engag'd to Bradamant he stood,
So to his martial sister now he vow'd,
The first fair hour occasion gave to take,
The Moorish camp with honour to forsake. 850
This had he fought before, but how in fight
He lay deep wounded by the Tartar knight,
Marphisa knew, who every day beside
His languid couch her friendly cares supply'd.

Marphisa

Marphisa then th' enamour'd maid address'd: 855
 Permit his absence, nor alarm thy breast:
 Few days shall see him to your sight restor'd,
 Nor longer Agramant be call'd his lord.
 Thus pleasing she; while yet her doubtful mind
 Had scarce revolv'd the purpose she design'd. 860
 Rogero bids adieu, and turns the rein
 To seek his king encamp'd on Arli's plain.

END OF THE SIXTEENTH BOOK.



THE
SEVENTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

THE ARGUMENT,

BRADAMANT and Marphisa, having parted with Rogero, arrive together at the Christian camp, where Marphisa is introduced to the emperor, and afterwards baptized in the Christian faith. The voyage of Aftolpho through the air, till having travelled over many countries, he arrives at the capital of king Senapus in Ethiopiâ, and undertakes to drive away the harpies from his table. He pursues them to the mouth of the infernal regions, at the foot of a high mountain, where he enters, and meets with the ghost of Lydia, daughter to the king of Lydia, who relates to him her story, and the cause of her punishment. He hears the names of several condemned to suffer there for ingratitude committed on earth. Aftolpho attempts to penetrate further into that place of torment, but is obliged to return. He then flies to the top of the mountain, where he finds the terrestrial Paradise. Description of the place. He is welcomed by St. John the Evangelist, and the prophets Enoch and Elias. St. John instructs Aftolpho concerning the manner of restoring Orlando to his senses.

THE
SEVENTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

ROGERO thus to Arli's walls return'd,
Where Agramant his shatter'd forces mourn'd,
While Bradamant and brave Marphisa, tied
In friendship's bond, and soon to stand allied
By nearer claims, pursu'd the way that led 5
To where king Charles his conquering banners spread,
And strain'd each nerve against the Pagan foe,
By war's whole force to lay their glory low,
And free at length the Christian's fair domain
From Afric's fury and the power of Spain. 10

Soon as th' approach of Bradamant was heard,
A sudden joy through all the camp appear'd.
Still as she pass'd, on either hand the crowd
Beheld with reverence, while to each she bow'd.

Her coming known, to meet the glorious maid 15
 Rinaldo hasten'd; nor Richardo stay'd;
 Brave Richardetto, all the numerous race
 Of noble Amon, mov'd with eager pace
 To bid the virgin welcome to the place,
 But when the tidings spread, that with her came 20
 Marphisa bold, in arms so great a name,
 Who from Cathay, with warlike laurels crown'd,
 Had bent her course to Spain's extremeſt bound,
 Nor rich nor poor within the tents remain'd,
 Such fond deſire each boſom entertain'd 25
 To enjoy the fight; deep thronging round they drew,
 Together ſuch a glorious pair to view.

To Charles they came, and ſhe who ne'er before
 Inclined her knee to any earthly power,
 Here firſt to Pepin's ſon that homage paid, 30
 Whoſe awful hand th' imperial ſceptre ſway'd,
 His tent forſaking, Charles advanc'd to meet
 The fearleſs maid, and near the regal ſeat
 Cloſe at his ſide in rank reſplendent plac'd,
 Above the kings, and lords, and barons grac'd. 35

Marphisa then her grateful ſpeech addreſs'd:
 O glorious king! o'er every ſovereign bleſt
 In arms unconquer'd—who from India's waves
 To where in Gades' ſtraits old ocean raves;

From

From Scythian snows to Ethiop's burning sand, 40

Hast made thy cross rever'd in every land!

Wiseft and best!—whose name all praise transcends,

And draws my step from earth's remotest ends:

But let me own that first, by envy wrought,

Fell war and enmity with thee I fought: 45

I came resolv'd such mighty power to wrest

From him, whose soul a different faith profess'd:

For this I dy'd the fields with Christian blood;

For this, thy ruthless foe, prepar'd I stood

To work thy further harms—but stronger fate 50

To sudden friendship chang'd my former hate.

While to thy loss I plann'd the future blow,

I found (but how some better time shall show)

Rogero, nam'd of Rifa, was my fire;

'Gainst whom a brother's treason durst conspire. 55

Me, in her womb, my luckless mother bore

Far o'er the seas, where, at my natal hour,

A sage magician bent his care to rear

My infant life—the seventh revolving year

Arabian spoilers snatch'd me from his hands 60

And sold to Persia, where in slavish bands

My person grew, till urg'd by lawless flame

The king my lord assail'd my virgin fame,

Then him, and with him all his court I slew,
Destroy'd his kindred, and his realm o'erthrew: 65

The crown I seiz'd—and scarce my age had told
The eighteenth sun in annual progress roll'd,
Seven realms subdu'd beneath my arms I won;
When envy kindling at thy high renown,

I bent my thoughts to lay thy trophies low, 70

And view'd in thee my faith, my glory's foe.

But now my will, by mightier power depress'd,

To milder purpose veils its haughty crest,

E'er since I learn'd my honour'd birth to trace

In lineage near thy own illustrious race. 75

Now, like my sire, a double tie I own,

Child of thy blood, and subject of thy throne.

She said; and claim'd the hallow'd baptist rite,

Resolv'd when first her sword had slain in fight

The Turkish prince, by Charles dismiss'd to go 80

And on her eastern realms the faith bestow;

Then turn on those her arm's resistless power,

That Trevigant and Mahomet adore;

With promise all her victor-sword might gain,

Should own the cause of CHRIST, and strengthen

Charles's reign. 85

The emperor, no less eloquent, than skill'd
In sage debate, and valiant in the field,

Much

Much prais'd the generous maid, and much he prais'd
 Her fire, her lineage, high in honour rais'd,
 To all her words he fram'd a fair reply, 90
 Intrepid courage beaming from his eye ;
 Then clos'd his speech, her proffer'd love to take,
 And her his daughter by adoption make,

Again he rose ; he clasp'd her to his breast,
 And with a father's kiss her forehead press'd, 95
 With welcome joy advanc'd on either hand
 The chiefs of Clarmont and Mograna's band.

'Twere long to tell how good Rinaldo paid
 Distinguish'd honours to the glorious maid ;
 Her deeds he witness'd, when the numerous powers
 Begirt Albracca's close beleaguer'd towers : 101

'Twere long to tell what joy in Guido's breast
 Her presence wrought ; what equal joy impress'd
 Brave Sanfonetto's soul ; nor less delight
 Had sable Aquilant, or Gryphon white, 105

Who late with her that cruel city * view'd
 Where murderous females held their rule in blood,
 With these good Malagigi, Vivian came ;
 And Richardetto, who the generous dame.

Beheld in fight, what time with his she join'd 110
 Her conquering arms against the treacherous kind

* CITY of the AMAZONS.

Of

Of foul Maganza, and Lanfufe's train,
Who met to sell the knights for fordid gain.

Imperial Charles himself, with zealous care,
Bids for th' ensuing day the pomp prepare, 115
When in the list, before the public fight,
Marphisa might receive the hallow'd rite.
Bishops and reverend clerks, to whom is given
To explain the Christian laws prescrib'd by Heaven,
He next conven'd, that these, by truth inspir'd, 120
Might teach Marphisa what our faith requir'd.
Th' archbishop, in his pontiff's weeds array'd,
Good Turpin, then baptiz'd the kneeling maid,
While pious Charles ministrant seem'd to stand,
And gently rais'd her with his regal hand. 125

Altolpho's voyage let us now pursue,
Whose rapid steed with eagle-pinions flew.
When now the knight had Gallia's land survey'd
'Twixt sea and sea, from where far winding stray'd
The silver Rhine, to where the subject plain 130
Joins high Pyrene's foot, he turns his rein
To where the western mountains sever France from
Spain.

Thence proud Navarre, and Arragon he views,
While every eye amaz'd his flight pursues.

Far

Far Teracona to the left remains, 135
 Biscaglia to the right; and now he gains
 Castilia's realm, and Lisbon's towers descries,
 And thence o'er Cordova and Seville flies:
 Each land he marks from Afric's billowy shore
 To rugged Atlas crown'd with forests hoar. 140
 Then turning from Carena's ridge of hills,
 Above the Cyrenean spires he wheels;
 And near the confines of her burning sands
 He Abbajada sees in Nubian lands:
 He leaves the tomb of Battus far behind, 145
 And Amon's fane, which we no more can find.
 Another Tremizen he views, whose race
 The unhallow'd faith of Mahomet embrace;
 Then tow'rds a second Ethiopia turns,
 Beyond where Nilus pours his fruitful urns: 150
 His wings he then to Nubia's city plies,
 That 'twixt Dabada and Coalles lies:
 Here Saracens, and Christians there prepar'd,
 With ready arms their country's frontier guard.
 In Ethiopia king Senapus reigns, 155
 Who, for a sceptre, in his hand sustains
 The holy cross; who boasts of wealth and power,
 Of towns and subjects to the red-sea shore.

Our

Our faith he owns,—that faith whose heavenly light
Can lead us from the realms of death and night : 160
Here, as the tenets of their law require,
(If fame deceive not) they baptize with fire :
Aftolpho now to Nubia's palace flew,
And there alighting near Senapus drew.

The feat where Ethiopia's sovereign dwell'd, 165
In wealth and beauty more than strength excell'd :
The bars and bolts that every gate defend,
The massy chains that from the bridge depend,
Whate'er in other cities we behold
Of iron wrought, here flam'd of beaten gold ; 170
Though mines they boasted fruitful to produce
Strong metals to apply for every use.

On columns huge, of shining crystal rais'd,
With matchless pomp the regal palace blaz'd ;
Each spacious room thick set with precious stone, 175
Where red and purple, gold and azure shone,
Gems of all hues ! where in fair order beam'd
The fiery ruby, where the emerald gleam'd
With softer light, and where the sapphire show'd
Its azure tint, or yellow topaz glow'd. 180
This climate balsam breeds, and midst her store
Jerusalem's rich land can boast no more.

Hence

Hence musk is brought, hence every rich perfume,
Hence amber, hence all Ocean's treasures come.
Whate'er through earth of costly name we prize, 185
This happy region for mankind supplies.
The Soldan who th' Egyptian sceptre sways,
As fame declares, his vassal tribute pays
To this great king, whose hand can turn aside,
And bid the Nile in other channels glide; 190
Whence Famine must her scourge o'er Cairo spread,
And desolation round the country shed:
His name Senapus by his subjects known,
By us 'tis Prester call'd, or Prester-John.
Of all who Ethiopia's kingdom held, 195
This king in honours, wealth, and might excell'd:
But what avail'd his honours, wealth, or might,
When wretched blindness veil'd his visual light?
Yet this his least of ills—a deeper woe
This hapless prince was doom'd to undergo, 200
Who, while his wealth all other wealth outshin'd,
In plenty's lap with endless famine pin'd.
When hunger urg'd him to the genial board,
With nectar'd draughts and costly viands flor'd,
Scarce was he seated, when the avenging crew 205
Of hell-bred harpies, horrible to view,

With

With ravenous talons seiz'd the savoury treat;
O'erturn'd the vases and devour'd the meat:
Their glutton maws furcharg'd, the birds unclean
Defil'd the remnant cates with filth obscene. 210

The cause was this—In early life so rais'd
Above the world, o'er every monarch prais'd,
Like Lucifer with pride his bosom burn'd;
Against his Maker impious arms he turn'd.
'Twas fam'd, where Egypt's hoary mountain shows
Its head in clouds, whence Nilus' fountain flows, 216
Was Paradise of old, those happy bowers
Where Adam pass'd with Eve the blissful hours,
With elephants and camels, with a train
Of countless foot that 'cumber'd all the plain, 220
He march'd, resolv'd whatever race unknown
Might there reside, to bend them to his throne.
But Heaven's high will oppos'd his rash intent,
And midst his host a vengeful angel sent,
Whose dreadful power a hundred thousand slew, 225
And o'er his eyes eternal darkness drew;
Then to his festive board dispatch'd the band
Of horrid monsters from th' infernal strand.
The wretched king of all relief despair'd,
From what a seer, of foresight deep, declar'd, 230
That

That rapine should no more his table waste,
Nor ordure mingle with each day's repast,
When on a winged steed a stranger-knight
Was seen through air to guide his rapid flight.
This, passing all belief, had long suppress'd 235
Each little hope that linger'd in his breast.

Soon as the crowds beheld, with wondering eye,
Above the walls, above the turrets high,
Th' approaching knight, one flew with eager zeal
To Nubia's king the tidings to reveal : 240
The prophecy recalling to his mind,
For joy he leaves his faithful staff behind,
And with extended arms and guideless feet
Impatient comes the flying guest to meet.

Astolpho, wheeling many a round in air, 245
At length alights within the castle square :
The fightless monarch, to his presence led,
With lifted hands before him kneel'd, and said.

Angel from God ! thou new Messiah, hear
A wretch, alas ! unworthy to prefer 250
His guilty suit—yet think, 'tis man's to fall
In error still, but thine to pardon all !
My crime I know, nor dare I sinful pray
To view, with sight restor'd, the beams of day :

'Tho' sure to thee such fovereign power is given, 255
God's favour'd nunciate from the seats of Heaven!

Suffice, I live in never-ending gloom:

But let not famine still my age consume:

Ah! stretch thy hand—thy saving help afford,
And chace the harpies from my wretched board. 260

Then midst my palace walls I vow to raise

A marble temple, sacred to thy praise,

On every part resplendent to behold

With dazzling gems, the roof and gates of gold:

Thy name shall to the fane a title give, 265

And there thy miracle in sculpture live.

So speaks the king, who rolls his darken'd eyes,
While oft to kiss the warrior's feet he tries.

Astolpho then—From God no angel I,
Nor new Messiah lighted from the sky, 270

But mortal man, like thee to error prone,

Unworthy of the grace that Heaven has shown:

Yet all I can—this arm its force shall prove,

By death or flight the monsters to remove:

If I succeed—to God thy thanks repay, 275

Who for thy succour hither wing'd my way.

For him alone be all thy vows fulfill'd,

To him thy altars raise, thy temples build.

As

As thus they commun'd, with th' attendant state
Of circling peers they reach'd the palace gate. 280
Within a sumptuous hall, beside him plac'd,
Alone Astolpho with Senapus grac'd
The regal board; and now the feast appear'd:
When soon in air a dreadful noise was heard
Of rushing wings; and, lo! the harpy-crew, 285
Lur'd by the viands, round the table flew.
Seven in a band they came, of dreadful mien,
With woman's face, with features pale and lean
Through seeming fast; from every withering look,
Fear, worse than death, the boldest bosom shook: 290
Large were their wings deform'd, their brutal paws
Of ravenous force, were arm'd with hooky claws:
Vast was each fetid paunch, with many a fold
Of serpent-tail behind in volumes roll'd.
They seize the meats, o'erturn the golden vase, 295
And leave their loathsome ordure in the place,
While their foul wombs a horrid stench exhale,
That chokes the sense and loads the tainted gale.
Astolpho now his shining falchion bares,
And swift to assault the dreadful crew prepares; 300
Now on the neck, or tail, his weapon tries;
Now on the breast, or wing, his force applies:

As from soft wool returns the bloodless sword;
The fated plumes and skin no pass afford.
Meanwhile of every dish and vase they make 305
Their greedy havock, nor the hall forsake,
Till each fell spoiler has the viands shar'd,
Or filth polluted what their hunger spar'd.

At length, his magic horn recall'd to mind,
From which such aid he oft was wont to find 310
At all assays, the duke resolv'd to prove
Its virtue now the monsters to remove:
But first he bade the king and nobles near
With ductile wax to bar the listening ear
From all access—else each, with fear aghast, 315
Would fly the palace at the dreadful blast.

He mounts the griffin-steed, one hand sustains
The polish'd horn, one holds the straiten'd reins:
He bids, by signs, the seneschal replace
The savoury viand, and the plenteous vase: 320
Then, in a new saloon, the train prepare
The festive table spread with costly fare;
And swift the harpies to their prey return;
As swift Astolpho to the rattling horn
His lips applies; when with unguarded ear 325
The fiends receive the sound, and struck with fear

Each

Each backward shrinks, and stretching to the wind
Her pinions, leaves the feast untouch'd behind.
To chace their flight, the champion spurs his steed,
That spreads his strong-plum'd wing with ready speed.
He quits the hall, from court and city flies, 331
And soaring drives the monsters through the skies.
Aftolpho swells each note with double force,
While tow'ards the burning zone, with headlong course,
The harpies speed, till now the hill they gain, 335
Whose towering head o'erlooks the subject plain,
Whence rumour tells the stream of Nilus glides,
And gladdens Egypt with his fattening tides.
And here ('twas fam'd) a dreadful passage led
To reach th' infernal mansions of the dead. 340
The band of spoilers hither flew to meet,
From every human search, a safe retreat;
And, sinking, pierc'd to black Cocytus' shore,
Where that dread-dealing blast could sound no more.
The glorious duke his horn's deep clangor ceas'd, 345
And clos'd the pinions of his winged beast:
Low at the mountain's foot his flight he stay'd,
Where in a gaping cavern's direful shade
The monsters enter'd—Hence, with wondering ears,
Laments and groans the listening warrior hears, 350

That reach'd through winding vaults the upper air ;
Sure sign of hell and endless torments there,

Astolpho, fearless still, resolves to go
And search the secrets of the world below.

Why should I doubt to enter here (he cries) 355

When such defence my trusty horn supplies,
Whose sound can Pluto's self and Satan quell,
And from his post the three-mouth'd dog repel ?

He said ; and lighting from his seat with speed,
Ty'd to a neighbouring tree his feather'd steed, 360

Then grasp'd the horn, his every hope and aid,
And dauntless plung'd amid the murky shade.

Ere far he reach'd, thick wreaths of noisome smoke,
And steams of sulphur, on his senses broke :

His sight and smell the stifling fumes confess'd, 365

Yet onward still th' embolden'd hero press'd ;

But as he press'd, the darkness deeper spread,

And grosser vapours noxious poisons shed:

When, lo ! as if suspended from above,

He sees an object, scarce distinguish'd, move, 370

Move, as some wretched corse by tempests beat,

Long time expos'd to rains and parching heat ;

So faint the straggling beams of wandering light

In these dire realms of smoke and dreary night,

In vain the duke explores with heedful care 375

What mocks his eyes, and seems to flit in air :

Then from the sheath his shining sword he drew,

And thrice he struck, when soon the warrior knew

The seeming image but an empty shade,

That like a cloud deceiv'd his mortal blade. 380

Then thus he heard a female voice complain :

Ah ! come not here to work me further pain !

Suffice—this smoke torments my wretched ghost,

This smoke that rises from the burning coast.

The duke, with terror seiz'd, his step repress'd, 385

And in these words the hapless shade address'd :

So may high Heaven these stifling fumes repel,

As thou shalt deign thy mournful state to tell.

The ghost reply'd—To visit but in name

The cheerful realms of light from which I came, 390

So grateful seems, that gladly I disclose,

At thy request, the story of my woes.

My fire o'er Lydia held his wide domain,

Once was I Lydia call'd, of royal strain,

Who, while alive, such scorn and hatred show'd 395

To one, whose heart with love's affection glow'd.

Unnumber'd others fill this dreary gloom,

Whom to like penance like offences doom.

Here cruel Anaxarete in woe,
 Encompas'd round with denser fumes below, 400
 Is deeper plac'd ; on earth her body turns
 To harden'd stone, while here her spirit mourns :
 Unfeeling maid ! who view'd in shameful death
 Her pendant lover yield his wretched breath.
 Daphne is here, who now regrets the pace 405
 That held Apollo once so long in chace,
 'Twere hard to tell th' unbodied female train
 That here for black ingratitude remain ;
 Or speak the crimes of every dame or maid,
 Where countless numbers fill the mournful shade ; 410
 But harder still th' ungrateful men to name,
 Whose deeds on earth here equal vengeance claim,
 Since dames are form'd more easy to believe,
 Man merits heavier pains who shall deceive .
 Their weaker sex—this Jason has confess'd ; 415
 This Theseus finds, and he *, the wandering guest, }
 Whose arms the Latian's ancient realm oppress'd.
 This well he knows, who could for Tamar's love
 His brother Absalom to hatred move.
 Here shades on shades lament their former lives, 420
 Their husbands some, and some betray'd their wives.

* ÆNEAS,

Great

Great was my beauty when this deathless mind
Was cloth'd in flesh; and, though of womankind
None match'd my form, I know not which was most,
My person's charms, or pride those charms to boast. 425
A knight there was in Thrace, whose noble name
For martial prowess stood the first in fame,
Who oft had heard from foreign tongues declar'd
My blooming praise, above my sex compar'd:
To Lydia's realms he came, where when he view'd 430
My every grace, he found his soul subdu'd.
Awhile residing at my father's court
Amidst the knights that thither made resort,
What deeds he wrought for one whose thankless mind
But ill deserv'd such matchless worth to find! 435
By him my sire Cilicia's kingdom won,
And Caria and Pamphilia's land o'er-run.
The knight, who deem'd his service well might claim
The royal favour, to the monarch came,
And begg'd, for all his hard-earn'd glorious spoils, 440
My hand in marriage to reward his toils.
His suit the king refus'd, who sought to join
His daughter to some prince's nobler line,
Not to a knight, to whom the fates afford
No wealth or power, save honour and his sword. 445

So

So much, alas ! could gold my fire entice,
Detested avarice ! nurse of every vice !
To worth or virtue he inclines his ears,
As the dull ass the heavenly minstrel hears.

When now the knight (Alcestes was his name) 450
Found that withheld, to which he urg'd his claim
Of just desert, he left us with a threat
The king hereafter should too late regret
My hand deny'd : Armenia then he gain'd,
Whose king with Lydia's king long strife maintain'd,
And late with grief had seen more powerful grow 456
The hated empire of his deadly foe.
Him soon Alcestes urges to prepare
His bands, and on my fire renew the war :
Himself, so fam'd in battle, at their head, 460
Against the Lydian realm the forces led.
He vow'd to conquer in Armenia's right
Whate'er he won, save only to requite
His glorious service, he reserv'd my charms
Of all the spoils that crown'd the victor's arms. 465
Our armies thrice he broke, and ere the sun
One year had circled, all our towns he won ;
All, save a castle strongly built, that rose
On hanging cliffs ; here from th' exulting foes

*

The

The king retir'd, and here with fearful haste 470
 His nearest friends and choicest treasure plac'd.
 But now so close the siege Alcestes press'd,
 That soon my wretched father, sore distress'd,
 By every means his safety to pursue
 In such extreme, decreed that I who drew 475
 Such ruin down, should quit the last retreat,
 And in his camp incens'd Alcestes meet.
 To him (so bade my fire) I took my way,
 My captive person at his feet to lay,
 And beg him at our prayer his wrath to cease, 480
 To accept our proffer'd terms, and grant the peace.
 Alcestes, when my near approach he heard,
 With eager haste to meet my steps appear'd:
 Pale in my sight the trembling lover stood,
 And less my victor than my prisoner show'd. 485
 I saw big passion struggling in his breast,
 And for new wiles my purpos'd speech suppress'd;
 Then took the fair occasion to reprove
 The dire effects of his disastrous love:
 I curs'd a love that thus oppress'd my fire, 490
 And fought by force to accomplish its desire;
 And though I came, compell'd by cruel fate,
 In dear compassion for a parent's state,

Yet

Yet little transport could attend those charms
Which force, not choice, had yielded to his arms. 495

In words like these I spoke, for well I view'd
His haughty spirit by my looks subdu'd.
I saw his face with sudden grief o'ercast;
So mourn sequester'd fainted offences past.
Low at my knees he bent, and humbly pray'd, 500
While from his side he drew the shining blade,
The murderous weapon at his hand to take,
And for his fault his life an offering make.

He thus dispos'd, I deem'd the conquest won,
And, to complete the work so well begun, 505
I gave him fraudulent hopes he yet might prove
By future deeds deserving of my love;
If, former guilt aton'd, his arm once more
Would to his ancient feat my fire restore,
And seek henceforth to win a mistress' charms 510
By gentle service, not by force of arms.
His faith now pledg'd, he to the fort again
Restor'd me, free, and guiltless of a stain.
Judge if for me Love fill'd not all his heart;
If Love for me employ'd not every dart. 515
Armenia's king he sought, to whose domain
His lips had vow'd whate'er his sword might gain;

And

And urg'd him to resign each Lydian town,
And bound his empire with Armenia's crown.
The king, whose cheek with wrath indignant burn'd,
To young Alcestes answer proud return'd; 521
That since a worthless woman's words could move
Alcestes' purpose, let Alcestes prove
Such fickle change, 'twas not for him to lose,
At his request, a victor's glorious dues. 525

Again my lover urg'd, again he pray'd;
Not prayer, nor reasons could the king persuade.
At length, incens'd, he swore in threatening strain
That force should win what mildness fail'd to gain.
Rage kindling rage with many a wrathful word, 530
Against the king Alcestes bar'd his sword,
And slew him, midst his own surrounding band:
That day th' Armenians fled before his hand,
And in a month his valorous arm restor'd
The Lydian kingdom to its ancient lord. 535
For all the loss that Lydia's crown sustain'd,
Beside the riches which in battle gain'd
He gave my fire, he to his empire joins .
The lands subdu'd, and levies heavy fines.

Instead of triumph, his return to greet, 540
We fain with death the victor chief would meet,

But

But fear withheld us, since we knew full well
He, strong in friends, could every force repel :
Hence, feigning love, I gave him, day by day,
Such flattering hope as better might betray ; 545
But, ere our nuptials, wish'd him for my sake
On other foes his proof of arms to make.
Now singly, now attended by a few,
I sent him strange adventures to pursue ;
To seeming death I sent—but still I found 550
With glorious conquest all his labours crown'd.
Whene'er he went, the fight he victor wag'd ;
Full oft with monsters front to front engag'd,
Giants and Lestrigons, whose savage band
With brutal force infested Lydia's land. 555
Not so Alcides, by his step-dame's wiles
And fierce Eurytheus, was expos'd to toils,
In Lerna's lake, in Thrace, Nemea's wood,
Etolia's vallies, near Iberus' flood ;
In Erymanthus' groves, along the strand 560
Of winding Tyber, or Numidia's sand.
My aim deceiv'd—another scheme I try'd,
From those he lov'd, his friendship to divide.
What shall I say ? The empress of his soul,
My word, my nod could every deed control : 565
To

To me he sacrific'd each dearest name,
 The ties of amity and calls of fame;
 Till all my father's foes remov'd I view'd,
 And rash Alcestes by himself subdu'd.

Yet pondering what I wish'd, too well I knew 570
 That public odium would his death pursue.
 Hence (all I could) I doom'd the hapless knight
 To live for ever banish'd from my sight:
 Struck with my base ingratitude, he pin'd
 With secret anguish, till his health declin'd 575
 From bad to worse, and while in vain he strove
 With many a prayer my stubborn heart to move,
 On his sick bed, in agonizing throes,
 He found a period to his life and woes.
 Lo! here the judgment that my sin pursues 580
 With stifling fumes, while tears my eyes suffuse;
 And here in sorrow must I ever dwell,
 Since no redemption can be found in hell.

When wretched Lydia thus had ceas'd to speak,
 The fearless duke press'd on, resolv'd to seek 585
 What other shades might there in pains reside;
 But deeper darkness further pass deny'd.
 The smoke, whose wreaths th' offending ghosts enclose
 In vaporous torment, dense and denser grows;

And

His courser then he mounts, and upward springs
To reach the mountain's top with daring wings ;
And view those seats by fame reported near 615
The silver circle of the lunar sphere.

Such ardent wishes in his bosom glow,
He pants for Heaven, and spurns the world below,
Ascending till with rapid steady flight
He gains the mansions of supernal light. 620

Not emerald here so bright a verdure yields
As the fair turf of those celestial fields,
O'er whose glad face the balmy season pours
The vernal beauties of a thousand flowers.
He sees the meads one intermingled blaze, 625
Where pearls and diamonds dart their trembling rays
With endless tints : he marks the ruby's hue,
The yellow topaz, and the sapphire blue.

At once the trees with leaves unfading grow ;
The fruits are ripen'd, and the blossoms blow ; 630
While frolic birds, gay-plum'd, of various wing,
Amid the boughs in notes melodious sing.

Still lakes and murmuring streams, with waters clear,
Charm the fix'd eye and lull the listening ear.

A softening genial air, that ever seems 635
In even tenor, cools the solar beams

With fanning breeze, while from th' enamell'd field
 Whate'er the fruits, the plants, the blossoms yield
 Of grateful smell, the stealing gales dispenſe
 The blended ſweets to ſeed th' immortal ſenſe. 640
 Amid the plain a palace dazzling bright,
 Like living flame, emits a ſteamy light,
 And, wrapt in ſplendors of refulgent day,
 Outſhines the ſtrength of every mortal ray.

Aſtolpho gently now directs his ſteed 645
 To where the ſpacious pile enfolds the mead
 In circuit wide, and views with raptur'd eyes
 Each nameleſs charm that happy ſoil ſupplies.
 With this compar'd, he deems our world below
 A dreary deſert and a ſeat of woe, 650
 By Heaven and Nature from their wrath beſtow'd
 In evil hour for man's unbleſt abode.

Near and more near the ſtately walls he drew
 In ſteadfaſt gaze, tranſported at the view:
 One gem intire they ſeem'd, of purer red 655
 Than deepening gleams transparent rubies ſhed;
 Such walls as no Dedalean art could raiſe,
 Stupendous work, tranſcending mortal praiſe.
 No more let man the boaſted ſeven proclaim,
 Thoſe wonders of the world ſo chronicled by Fame !
 Before

Before the palace, at the shining gate, 661
 A sage appears, the 'duke's approach to wait,
 Whose aged limbs a vest and mantle hide,
 This milky hu'd, and that with crimson dy'd :
 Adown his breast a length of beard he wears 665
 All silvery white, and silvery white his hairs ;
 His mien bespeaks th' elect of heavenly grace,
 And Paradise seems open'd in his face.

Then to the champion, who his feat forsook
 With reverend awe, he with benignant look 670
 These words address'd—O thou ! by God's high will
 Alone conducted to this holy hill ;
 Not to thy wisdom, or superior might,
 Hither, O son ! ascribe thy daring flight :
 For know, if God's assisting hand had fail'd, 675
 Nor horn, nor winged steed had aught avail'd.
 Hereafter more at leisure shall we dwell
 On themes so high ; then shalt thou hear me tell
 What Heaven designs ; but first with due repast
 Refresh thy strength, unnerv'd with length of fast. 680

So spoke the hallow'd fire : the duke amaz'd,
 With heart-felt awe and mute attention gaz'd :
 When now the Saint disclos'd his sacred name,
 He, from whose pen th' eternal gospel came,

That holy John, who, while on earth, possess'd 685
So dear a place in his Redeemer's breast:

Of whom the fame among his brethren spread,
That time should ne'er consign him to the dead :

Lo ! hither was he borne, and here to share
With him in bliss, he found a heavenly pair : 690

Here ancient Enoch, here Elias dwell'd,
Who ne'er the fatal hour of death beheld.

Above our air, which noxious fumes annoy,
These happy three unfading spring enjoy,
Till the last notes th' Angelic trump shall sound, 695
And CHRIST in clouds appear with glory crown'd.

Each saint, with welcome, comes the knight to meet,
And courteous lead him to their blest retreat,
Where, near at hand, fair ample stalls retain
His flying courser, fed with generous grain. 700
Before the knight delicious fruits are plac'd,
Fruits cull'd in Paradise, whose flavorful taste
He surely thought might some forgiveness win
For our first parents' disobedient sin.

When now th' adventurous duke was well supply'd
With every need such dwelling could provide ; 706
When nature's calls refresh'd ; when genial food
And balmy slumber had his strength renew'd ;

Aurora

Aurora rising, who with blushing charms
 All night repos'd in old Tithonus' arms; 710
 He left his early couch, and near him stood
 The sage disciple so belov'd of God,
 Who grasp'd his hand, and in discourse reveal'd
 High truths in converse long, though here conceal'd.

Then thus—Since leaving France thou canst not
 tell 715

What to thy dear Orlando there befall;
 Learn that the chief whose valour once in fight
 Maintain'd the truth, forsaking now the right,
 Is scourg'd by God, who, when his anger moves,
 With heavier wrath afflicts whom most he loves. 720
 Thy dear Orlando, at his favour'd birth
 Endow'd by Heaven above the sons of earth
 With nerve and courage; gifted to sustain,
 With limbs unhurt, each weapon aim'd in vain:
 To whom such virtue Heaven's Supreme had lent, 725
 To guard his faith unstain'd, as when he sent
 Great Sampson forth, to save with mighty hand
 His Hebrews from the fierce Philistine band:
 Behold that same Orlando now afford
 An ill return to Heaven's Almighty Lord. 730

So far a Pagan damsel's form could move.
His hapless bosom to detested love,
That more than once he, for her beauty's sake,
Prepar'd his faithful kinsman's life to take.
Hence him, in justice, God's high doom assign'd 735
Naked to rove, an outcast of mankind;
Has quench'd each sense, in wretched frenzy tost,
Lost to his friends, to all remembrance lost.
So God, of old, in annals pure we read,
In penance for his heavy sins, decreed 740
A monarch seven long years to graze the plain,
And like the brutal ox his wretched life sustain.
But since the Paladin less guilt incurr'd
Than he, condemn'd to mingle with the herd,
Three months alone the sage decrees of Heaven 745
Th' allotted time to atone his fault have given.
Not for less cause to this celestial height
Our dear Redeemer now permits thy flight;
Than from my lips such counsel to receive,
That lost Orlando may his wits retrieve. 750
But first this globe of earth and sea forsake,
And, led by me, a flight more daring take
To yonder moon, that in her orbit rolls
The nearest planet to our earthly poles.

Lo!

Lo ! there is kept, what only can supply

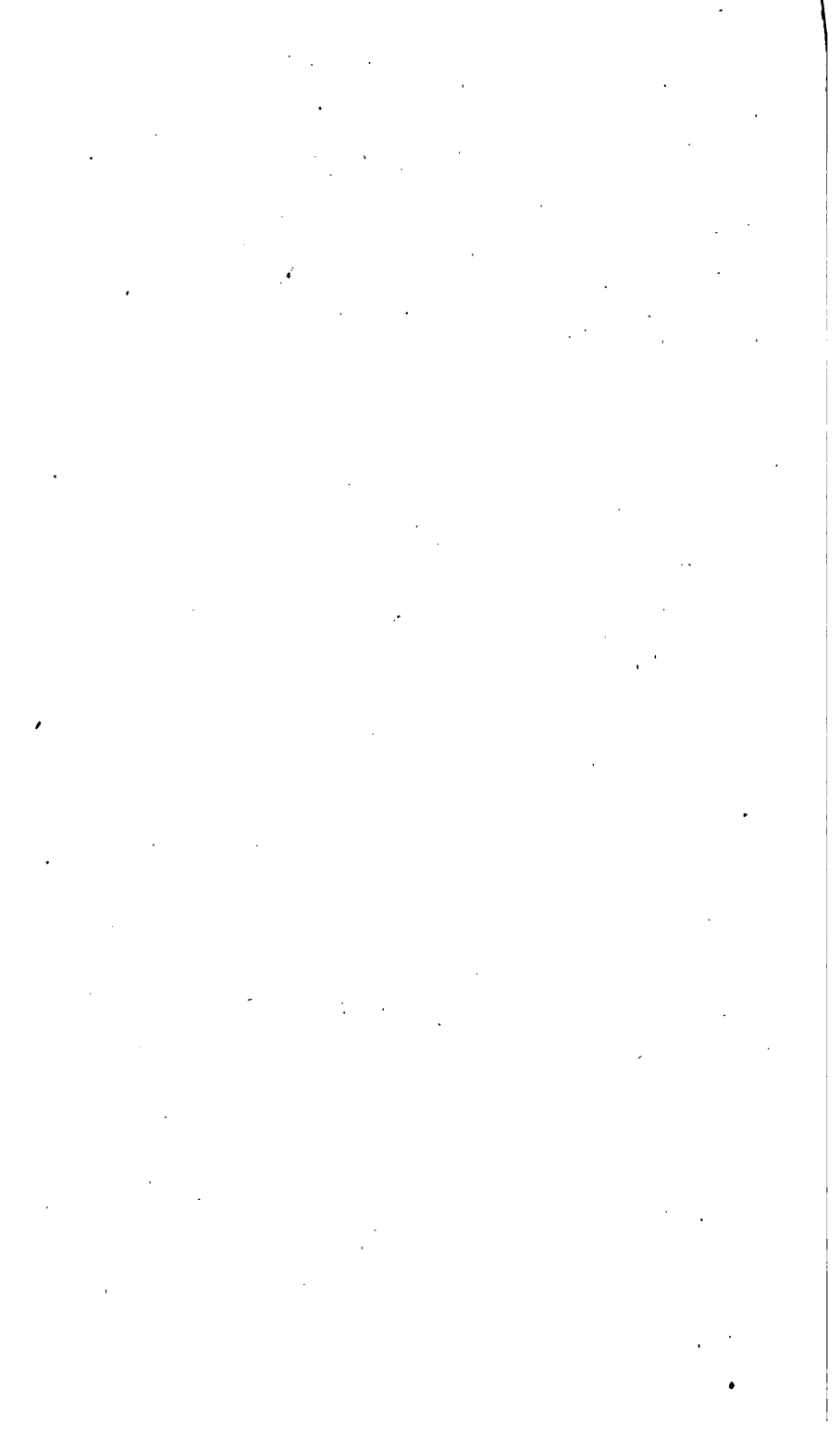
755

Orlando's wisdom, once esteem'd so high ;

And when this night above our heads in view

She wheels her course, our journey we'll pursue.

END OF THE SEVENTEENTH BOOK.



THE
EIGHTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

THE ARGUMENT.

SAINT John conveys Astolpho, in a chariot, to the region of the moon; the many wonders he saw there, and among the rest Orlando's Wit, which the Evangelist permits him to take with him, The three fatal Sisters spinning the thread of life. Allegory of Time: further discourse of Saint John with Astolpho: eulogium on writers. The Spirit dismisses Astolpho from Paradise, The knight returns to Nubia, where he restores Senapus to sight, who raises a vast army to enable him to carry on the war in Africa. His march into the dominions of Agramant. The wind secured in a bag. Transformation of stones to horses. Agramant calls a council at Arli. Speeches of Marfilius and Sobrino: by the advice of the latter, Agramant sends an embassy to Charles, with proposals to terminate the war by a single combat. Charles accepts the conditions. Rogero is chosen on the side of the Pagans, and Rinaldo on the side of the Christians. Affliction of Bradamant. Preparations for the list, and the ceremonies previous to the combat.

THE
EIGHTEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

THUS all the live-long day th' apostle mild
With sage discourse the flying hours beguil'd;
But when the sun was sunk in ocean's stream,
And from her horns the moon her silver beam
Above them shed, a wondrous car appear'd, 5
That oft through those bright fields of ether steer'd:
The same that, where Judean mountains rise,
Receiv'd Elias, rapt from mortal eyes.
Four courfers, red as flame, the hallow'd sage *,
The blest historian of the sacred page, 10
Join'd to the yoke; and now the reins he held;
And, by Aftolpho plac'd, the steeds impell'd
To rise aloft: soft rose the wondrous car,
The wheels smooth turning through the yielding air;

* ST. JOHN.

The

The favour'd warrior and the guiding feer 15

Ascending till they reach'd the torrid sphere :

Here fire eternal burns, but while they pass'd,

No noxious heat the raging vapours cast.

Through all this elemental flame they soar'd,

And next the circle of the moon explor'd, 20

Whose spheric face in many a part outshin'd

The polish'd steel from spots and rust refin'd :

Its orb, increasing to their nearer eyes,

Swell'd like the earth, and seem'd an earth in size,

Astolpho wondering view'd what to our sight 25

Appears a narrow round of silver light :

Nor could he thence, but with a sharpen'd eye,

And bending brow, our lands and seas descry,

The land and seas, which, lost in vaprous shade

So far remote, to viewless forms decay'd. 30

Far other lakes than ours this region yields,

Far other rivers, and far other fields ;

Far other vallies, plains, and hills supplies,

Where stately cities, towns, and castles rise ;

Where lonely woods extensive tracts contain, 35

And sylvan nymphs pursue the savage train.

Deep in a vale, conducted by his guide,

Where rose a mountain steep on either side,

Ho

He came, and saw (a wonder to relate)
 Whate'er was wasted in our earthly state 40
 Here safely treasur'd : each neglected good ;
 Time squander'd, or occasion ill-bestow'd.
 Not only here are wealth and sceptres found,
 That, ever changing, shift th' unsteady round ;
 But those possessions, while on earth we live, 45
 Which Fortune's hand can neither take nor give.
 Much fame is there, which here the creeping hours
 Consume, till time at length the whole devours.
 There vows, and there unnumber'd prayers remain,
 Which oft to Heaven the sinner makes in vain. 50
 The frequent tears that lovers' eyes suffuse,
 The sighs they breathe ; the days that gamesters lose.
 The leisure given which fools so oft neglect ;
 The weak designs that never take effect.
 Whate'er desires the mortal breast assail, 55
 In countless numbers fill th' encumber'd vale.
 For know whate'er is lost by human kind,
 Ascending here you treasur'd safe may find.
 The wondering Paladin the heaps admir'd,
 And now of these and now of those enquir'd. 60
 Of bladders huge a mountain he beheld,
 That seem'd within by shouts and tumults swell'd,

And

And imag'd found by these the crowns of yore
 Which Lydian and Assyrian monarchs wore,
 Which Greeks and Persians own'd, once great in
 fame, 65

And scarcely now remember'd but in name.
 Of gold and silver form'd, a heapy load
 Of hooks he saw, and these were gifts bestow'd
 By needy slaves, in hope of rich rewards,
 On greedy princes, kings, and patron lords. 70
 He saw in garlands many a snare conceal'd;
 And flatteries base his guide in these reveal'd.
 There forms of creaking grasshoppers he spy'd;
 Smooth verses these, to fawning praise apply'd.
 There sparkling chains he found, and knots of gold,
 The specious ties that ill-pair'd lovers hold. 76
 There eagles' talons lay, which here below
 Are power which lords on deputies bestow.
 On every cliff were numerous bellows cast,
 Great princes' favours these that never last; 80
 Given to their minions first in early prime,
 And soon again resum'd with stealing time.
 Cities he saw o'erturn'd, and towers destroy'd,
 And endless treasures scatter'd through the void:
 Of these he ask'd; and these (reply'd the fire) 85
 Were treasons foul, and machinations dire.

He

He serpents then with female faces view'd,
 Of coiners and of thieves the hateful brood.
 Of broken vials many heaps there lay ;
 These were the services that courts repay. 90
 He saw a steaming liquid scatter'd round
 Of savoury food ; and from his teacher found
 That this was alms, which, while his last he breathes,
 A wretched finner to the poor bequeaths.
 Then to a hill of vary'd flowers they went, 95
 That sweet before, now yields a fetid scent ;
 This (let me dare to speak) that present show'd,
 Which on Sylvester Constantine bestow'd.
 Of bird-lime twigs he saw vast numbers there ;
 And these, O gentle dames! your beauties were. 100
 Vain is th' attempt in story to comprize
 Whate'er Astolpho saw with wondering eyes :
 A thousand told, ten thousand would remain ;
 Each toil, each loss, each chance that men sustain,
 Save Folly, which alone pervades us all ; 105
 For Folly never quits this earthly ball.
 There his past time mispent, and deeds apply'd
 To little good, Astolpho soon espy'd ;
 Yet these, though clear beheld, had ne'er been known,
 But that the sage explain'd them for his own. 110

At length they came to that whose want below
 None e'er perceiv'd, or breath'd for this his vow;
 That choicest gift of Heaven, by Wit exprest,
 Of which each mortal deems himself possess.
 Of this Astolpho view'd a wondrous store, 115
 Surpassing all his eyes beheld before.
 It seem'd a fluid mass of subtlest kind,
 Still apt to mount, if not with care confin'd :
 But gather'd there he view'd it safely clos'd,
 In many a vase of various size dispos'd. 120
 Above the rest the vessel's bulk excell'd,
 Whose womb Orlando's godlike reason held :
 This well he knew, for on its side were writ
 These words, in letters fair, ORLANDO'S WIT.
 Thus every vase in characters explain'd 125
 The names of those whose wits the vase contain'd :
 Much of his own the noble duke amaz'd
 Amongst them view'd, but wondering more he gaz'd
 To see the wits of those, whom late he thought
 Above their earthly peers with wisdom fraught. 130
 But who can such a fleeting treasure boast,
 From some new cause each hour, each moment, lost
 One, while he loves ; one, seeking fame to gain ;
 One, wealth pursuing through the stormy main ;

One, trusting to the hopes which great men raise, 135

One, whom some scheme of magic guile betrays.

Some, from their wits for fond pursuits depart,

For jewels, paintings, and the works of art.

Of poets' wits, in airy visions lost,

Great store he read; of those who to their cost 140

The wandering maze of sophistry pursu'd;

And those who vain presaging planets view'd.

The vase that held his own Astolpho took,

So will'd the writer of the mystic book *;

Beneath his nostril held, with quick ascent 145

Back to its place the wit returning went.

The amplest vessel fill'd above the rest

With that fam'd sense, which once the earl possess'd,

Astolpho seiz'd, and found a heavier load

Than plac'd amidst th' unnumber'd heap it show'd.

Ere yet for earth they quit that sphere of light, 151

The sage Apostle leads the Christian knight

Within a stately dome, where, fast beside,

A rapid river rolls its constant tide.

Here, heap'd with many a fleece, each room he views,

And silk and wool unwrought of various hues, 156

Some fair, some foul: a beldame these with skill

Selects, and whirling round the rapid reel

Draws the fine thread : so from the reptile swarms,
 Whose industry the silken texture forms, 160
 The village maid untwines the moisten'd flue,
 When summer bids the pleasing task renew.
 A second beldame from the first receives
 Each finish'd work, while in its stead she leaves
 A fleece unspun : a third, with equal care 165
 Divides, when spun, th' ill-favour'd from the fair.
 What means this mystic show ?—Astolpho cries
 To holy John—and thus the Saint replies.

In yonder aged dames the Parcae know,
 Who weave the thread of human life below. 170
 Long as the fleeces last, so long extend
 The days of man, but with the fleece they end.
 With watchful eyes see Death and Nature wait,
 And mark the hour to close each mortal date.
 The beauteous threads, selected from the rest, 175
 Are types of happy souls amid the blest;
 These form'd for Paradise : the bad are those
 Condemn'd for sin to never-ending woes.

Of all the fleeces by the beldame wrought,
 Of all the fleeces to the spindle brought, 180
 The living names were cast in many a mold
 Of iron, silver, and resplendent gold ;

These, heap'd together, form'd a mighty pile,
 And hence an aged fire, with ceaseless toil,
 And matchless swiftness, from the numbers took 185
 Names after names, and from his mantle shook,
 As oft as to the water's brink he came,
 Th' oblivious waters known by Lethe's name:
 What tablets sinking there, to rise no more,
 The rapid eddies to the bottom bore ! 190
 Beside, and o'er the stream, a feather'd crew
 Of crows, of choughs, and ravenous vultures flew ;
 And many a different bird, that hover'd nigh
 With clattering pinions and discordant cry.
 These, as they saw the wayward fire display 195
 His treasure, hasten'd to partake the prey :
 One with his crooked talons, one with beak
 A tablet seiz'd, but found his strength too weak
 To bear it far, and when in air he try'd
 His daring flight, the weight his flight deny'd. 200
 Amidst the winged tribe two swans appear'd,
 White as the banners by my patron rear'd,
 That each recover'd from the stream at will
 Some sinking medal in his sacred bill ;
 And spite of him who with such fell intent 205
 Innumerable titles from his mantle sent,

The pious birds a chosen few repriev'd :
Oblivion's whelming gulph the rest receiv'd.
Along the tide now swam the snow-white pair,
Now soar'd on fluttering wings through yielding air,
Till near the borders of the fatal flood 211
They reach'd a hill, on whose high summit stood
A temple built to never-dying Fame,
Whence, down the steep, a beauteous virgin came,
Of each fair cygnet on the banks to take 215
The names redeem'd from Lethe's silent lake.
These round the statue that sublimely plac'd
Upon a column's height the center grac'd,
She hung aloft in honour of the fane,
And bade them there unchang'd for ages to remain.

What hoary fire was this, and why he gave 221
The names engraven to the greedy wave ;
Much of the swans to know, the duke desir'd ;
Of that fair virgin and her hill enquir'd :
And much he long'd to hear the sense reveal'd, 225
Beneath those visionary forms conceal'd.
All this to learn, he ask'd his gracious guide:
And thus the holy man of God reply'd.

Know first, that not a leaf on earth can move,
But bears its correspondent type above. 230
On

On earth and here the same effects we find,
In semblance differing, but alike in kind :
The fire, whose beard adown his bosom flows,
Whose wonderous speed no mortal equal knows,
Here works the same effect in mystic show, 235
That time performs on changing things below.
When here the fatal thread of man is spun,
Of human life below the course is run.
While Fame is there, lo ! here her equal sign,
And both alike were deathless, both divine ; 240
But that yon fire here makes the names his prey,
And time below wastes all with slow decay,
Crows, vultures, choughs, and all the feather'd train,
Here strive to bear the sinking names in vain :
These are on earth the servile band and base, 245
Flatterers and parasites that courts disgrace ;
Buffoons, by whom is every vice pursu'd,
Yet priz'd too oft above the wise and good.
All these are courtiers call'd, of sordid mind,
(Like the vile ass, or swine's detested kind) 250
Who bred in feasts to waste the glutton hour,
With greedy taste the savoury cates devour ;
Who when the Parcæ end their master's days,
When Venus or intemperate Bacchus slays,

Bear in their mouths awhile each patron theme, 255
 Then drop the burthen in oblivion's stream.
 But as the swans, with soft melodious strain
 Convey the medals safe to yonder fane;
 So virtue's deeds the poet's tuneful breath
 Extends to latest times beyond the stroke of death. 260
 O ! happy princes ! train'd in learning's lore,
 Who tread the path by Cæsar * trod before,
 And while you list each writer to your side,
 Fear not th' absorbing waves of Lethe's tide.
 Rare as these swans, so rare the poet's name, 265
 Such poets as the Muses' honours claim ;
 For Heaven bestows but with a sparing hand
 Illustrious men, to grace a favour'd land ;
 And oft the churlish lord, without regard,
 Leaves godlike Genius pining for reward. 270
 The bad meet smiles ; the good oppression find ;
 And noble arts are banish'd from mankind.
 Sure Heaven deprives the great of inward light,
 To quench their souls in intellectual night,
 And makes them scorn the bard's mellifluous lays, 275
 That death may blot their name to future days.
 Would these but make one tuneful muse their friend,
 (Whate'er their crimes) their memory might extend

* AUGUSTUS CÆSAR.

In time's fair page, and favours sweet dispense,
As costly myrrh, or odorous frankincense. 280
Æneas' self was not so pious found,
Nor Hector nor Achilles so renown'd
For deeds of arms, but numbers might we tell
Whose martial glories could those chiefs excel.
The favour, by their rich descendents show'd, 285
The princely gifts, the palaces bestow'd,
Exalt their actions to the highest praise
That fiction paints, or history can raise.
Deem not Augustus' life so free from blame
As Virgil's trump delivers him to fame; 290
His skill in verse and love to bards display'd,
The dire proscription veils in friendly shade.
Not one might now on Nero's guilt exclaim,
Nor infamy perchance attend a name
By Gods and men abhorr'd, had he ensur'd 295
The pen of writers, and the muse secur'd.
On Agamemnon Homer wreaths bestows,
And paints the Trojans vanquish'd by their foes;
Tells how Penelope, amidst the train
Of lawless suitors, could her faith maintain: 300
But would you see the truth no more conceal'd,
Who knows but thus the tale might stand reveal'd,

That Greece was routed, Troy the conquest gain'd,
And that Penelope her nuptials stain'd ?

Hear too what fate unhappy Dido found, 305

Dido with truth and every virtue crown'd :

But she, since Maro was her foe, has left

A name of chastity and truth bereft.

Be not surpriz'd if on this theme I dwell,

And warmly speak of what I feel so well. 310

To writers every debt of love I owe,

Myself a writer in your world below.

Above my peers I gain'd such honour'd grace,

No death shall end it, and no time deface ;

And every grateful thought to him is ow'd, 315

To holy CHRIST, whose hand such gifts bestow'd.

But wretched those, in hours of grief expos'd,

On whom the gates of courtesy are clos'd ;

Who with pale want and famine on their cheek,

By night or day in vain an entrance seek ! 320

And hence (th' unpleasing subject to pursue)

Few are the poets as the patrons few ;

Since savage beasts from that rude climate fly,

Whose barren sands nor shade nor food supply.

So spoke, with kindling warmth, the blessed fire,

While either eye-ball flash'd with heavenly fire, 326

Till,

Till, turning to the duke, his speech he clos'd,
And in a smile benign his looks compos'd.

And now descending from the lunar height,
In Paradise the Saint and warrior light: 330

The sacred vase they bring whose wondrous power
Must the great master of the war * restore.

Then holy John to good Astolpho show'd

A potent herb, with virtues rare endow'd;

With this, return'd to earth, he will'd the knight 335

To touch the Nubian king, and heal his sight.

Then would the grateful prince, for eyes restor'd,

And hungry harpies banish'd from his board,

To assail Biserta's walls his aid afford.

He taught him how to arm the troops unskill'd 340

In martial toil, and train them to the field;

And how unhurt to tread the burning way,

Where blinding sands in circling eddies play.

Reluctant then his leave Astolpho took,

The hallow'd Saint and blissful seats forfook: 345

Above the Nile he wheel'd his rapid flight,

Till Nubia's nearer realm appear'd in sight;

Then in the city's walls with swift descent

Alighting, to Senapus' presence went,

Great was the joy the knight returning brought 350
To Nubia's king, who oft in grateful thought
Confess'd that aid, which from the ravenous power
Of famish'd harpies freed his genial hour,

But when the champion now had purg'd away
The cloudy film that veil'd his visual ray, 355
Th', enraptur'd monarch, for his sight restor'd,
His great deliverer as a God ador'd ;

Nor only granted at his first demands,
To invade Biferta's wall, auxiliar bands,
But rais'd a host to which the mightiest yield, 360
Twice fifty thousand marshall'd for the field ;

And preffer'd these to head—the groaning plain
Could scarce the ranks of trampling foot sustain,
On foot they march'd, for rare the race of steeds
In Nubia nurtur'd, while in troops she breeds 365
The camel, patient long of parching toil,
And elephant, that shakes the labouring soil,

The night preceding, ere the numerous bands
Prepar'd to tread th' inhospitable sands,
The Paladin his winged steed bestrides, 370
Then to the south his rapid pinion guides,
And gains at length the cave, where issuing forth
The southern wind first breathes against the north :

The

The champion (as his sage instructor taught)
 With him prepar'd a bag capacious brought; 375
 And while fatigu'd within the cavern deep
 Th' outrageous blast lay hush'd in quiet sleep,
 This at the entrance close, with silent care,
 Unknown to him, who little dreamt the snare,
 Aftolpho held; and when with rapid force 380
 At morn the wind assay'd its wonted course,
 The closing bag the rushing plague repell'd,
 And in its womb the struggling captive held.

And now the duke his glorious march pursu'd
 Safe in th' imprison'd wind, while round he view'd 385
 Th' unstable sands, till from a mountain's height
 The plain and distant shore appear'd in sight.
 Himself, as one who seem'd by looks intent
 On some great purpose, gain'd the hill's ascent;
 There first the ground with knee devoutly press'd, 390
 Then to his patron Saint his prayer address'd:
 Secure that Heaven would listen to his vows,
 From scattering hands a stony shower he throws—
 O! wondrous deeds of those who CHRIST believe!
 The falling stones a sudden change receive; 395
 Each takes new shape, and grows a living beast,
 With well-turn'd hoof, arch'd neck, and nervous chest:

To neighings shrill the winding crags resound ;
The new-form'd race in many a sprightly bound
Rush to the subject vale with eager speed, 400
Where every stone is now a generous steed.

They snort, they foam, they leap in sportive play,
Of various colour, dappled, roan, or bay.

The squadrons, that beneath in order stand,
These soon behold ; as soon with ready hand 405
Secure, and mounting pour along the plain ;
For each was form'd with saddle, bit, and rein.

When Agramant had pass'd to Gallia's strand,
Three kings he left to guard his Afric land :

The king of Ferza, Algazieri's king, 410
And king Branzardo—these their numbers bring
To oppose the duke, but first with sails and oars
A rapid bark they send to Europe's shores,
That Agramant might learn what ills arose
From such incursion of the Nubian foes. 415

Through surging tides the vessel night and day
To Arli's port pursues her ready way ;
There finds the king with various woes distressed,
And near by Charles' advancing powers oppress.

King Agramant, who heard his own domain 420
Endanger'd thus, while Pepin's realm to gain

He

He cross'd the seas, conven'd to deep debate
 The chiefs and princes of the Pagan state.
 There once or twice his careful eyes he cast
 Where king Marfilius and Sobrino plac'd, 425
 The council join'd; of all the honour'd train
 Wifest and eldest—when he thus began.

Though ill it fits a leader's name to own,
 He ne'er divin'd what future time made known;
 Yet will I say should such misfortune light, 430
 As mock'd the prescience of a mortal fight,
 Error were venial then—that Afric's lands
 Were left disarm'd expos'd to Nubia's bands,
 The fault was mine—but who save Heaven (whose eye
 Can every deep event of time descry) 435
 Could e'er have thought from realms remov'd afar,
 So huge a host would wage in Afric's war;
 Whose clime beyond the burning desert lies,
 Where clouds of sand in dusty whirlwind rise?
 Declare, O chiefs! if spent with fruitless toil 440
 Our baffled troops shall quit this hostile soil;
 Or urge the conflict on, till hence we bear
 Yon Christian Charles a prisoner of the war:
 But how to guard at once my regal seat,
 And leave this empire crush'd with great defeat; 445

Let each disclose the thought that sways his breast,
While we from various counsels choose the best.

Here ended Agramant; and as he spoke,
On Spain's imperial lord, who next him took
His honour'd place, he fix'd an earnest eye, 450
As from his lips awaiting a reply.

He, rising slow, awhile in silence stood
Before his chief, and first with reverence bow'd;
Resuming then his place, in words prepar'd,
He thus the purport of his mind declar'd, 455

When Fame, O monarch! good or evil tells,
Evil or good beyond the truth she swells.

I little trust in tales, that idly bred,

From tongue to tongue with lying rumours spread.

Less can I credit that, which sure will find 460
No credit from a cool considerate mind.

Who can believe that, with such numerous bands, }
A king, who holds the sway o'er distant lands, }
Should bend his march thro' Afric's burning sands? }

Perchance from native hills th' Arabian train 465

May make incursion on the neighbouring plain;

Meanwhile Branzardo, whose deputed sway

(His king's vicegerent) Afric's powers obey,

For every ten a thousand writes, that blame

For such defeat may less attend his name. 470

Grant

Grant that the Nubians are by wondrous power
 Sent like some storm or heaven-directed shower ;
 Weak were indeed thy soldiers' hearts to show
 Inglorious fear of such a dastard foe.
 Yet from thy ships dispatch a chosen few, 475
 And let thy standards but appear in view ;
 Nubians and naked Arabs all shall fly,
 And in their wonted confines trembling lie. —
 But thou on Charles with double ardor press,
 His kinsman's absence must ensure success ; 480
 Orlando lost, of all yon Christian foes
 Not one shall more your rising fates oppose,
 Unless yourself neglect the glorious crown,
 That waits to bind your temples with renown ;
 Till time from thee his favouring lock shall turn, 485
 And we too late our shame and ruin mourn.

With words like these, in reason's garb address'd,
 Spain's mighty lord the peers assembled press'd,
 And urg'd to keep in France the martial bands
 Till Charles was exil'd from his native lands. 490

Then king Sobrino spoke, whose judgment view'd
 That king Marilius less in speech pursu'd
 The general cause, than labour'd to conceal
 His private aims with show of public zeal.

He

He thus—When peace I counsell'd, would to
Heaven 495

Th' event had shown that ill th' advice was given !
Or that thou then hadst deign'd, O king ! to hear
Thy old Sobrino with a willing ear ;
Nor then in Rodomont confided most,

In Marlabusto and Alzirdo's boast, 500

With Martifino—would that each I name

Were present now !—but chief that son of fame,

Stern Rodomont, who vow'd in every chance

Thy fate to follow with his single lance,

And crush beneath his arm the brittle power of

France :

505

So might my tongue reproach the recreant knight

Who lives in sloth, a truant from the fight ;

While I, who durst ungracious truths declare,

(Then deem'd a coward) still thy fortune share,

And yet will share, while life informs my breast, 510

That life, which now with weight of years oppress,

Amidst the first I stand prepar'd to yield

To every Frank that dares us in the field.

Hear then, O king ! my counsel to retreat,

And turn with speed to thy paternal seat.

515

What is our gain thou know'st—from Afric's shore

Full thirty kings, the vassals of thy power,

We

We cross'd the seas—now count the remnant train,
 And scarce a wretched third alive remain !
 Forbid it, Heaven, or more must yet be lost— 520
 Shouldst thou, O monarch ! follow to our cost
 Th' improsperous war, soon death may level all,
 And chiefs and people share one common fall !
 Orlando's absence yields but little aid
 To force like ours with every day decay'd. 525
 Behold Rinaldo, fam'd in many a fight,
 And scarcely yielding to Orlando's might :
 Behold his brethren, kinsmen, all the train
 Of Paladins, whose deathless arms maintain
 The Christian cause ; whose deeds the world reveres,
 And every Saracen with terror hears. 531
 With these another Mars exacts the praise
 Which to a foe my tongue reluctant pays ;
 The valiant Brandimart, whose fearless breast
 (Like his Orlando) danger ne'er depress'd. 535
 To sufferings now endur'd, my boding mind
 Foretels, alas ! more sufferings yet behind.
 Lo ! Mandricardo pale in death is laid,
 And stern Gradasso has withdrawn his aid :
 While these we lose, while breathless on the plain 540
 Thousands by thousands lie our warriors slain ;

While all our troops are drawn from Afric's shore,
 Nor can supplies our drooping hopes restore,
 Four knights have join'd with Charles, whose martial
 name

Equals Orlando or Rinaldo's fame : 545

Perchance to thee is savage Guido known,
 With Sanfonetto, and each generous son
 Of Olivero born *—these more I fear
 Than many a knight, than many a valiant peer,
 That Germany and various regions send 550
 Against our force their empire to defend.

Whene'er we dare the field, the field we lose,
 And infamy with rout our arms pursues.
 In time retire—and with thy kingdom save
 Our few survivors from a foreign grave. 555

Marfilius left, the world perchance may blame
 Thy breach of faith—but to preserve thy name
 From all reproach, such terms thou may'st ensure
 As shall, with thine, Marfilius' peace secure.
 Yet with thy fame if ill it seems to stand, 560
 That thou, first injur'd, should'st a truce demand ;
 If, still untir'd, on war thy thoughts are bent,
 (With what success thou seest by sad event)

* GRYPHON and AQUILANT.

One

One only way remains to turn the tide
 Of wavering conquest from the Christian side: 565
 Hear but my counsel—to some valorous knight
 Entrust our kingdom's cause in single fight,
 And be Rogero nam'd the champion of thy right. }
 But if thou still pursu'st a general war,
 Though more than human deeds his worth declare,
 He stands but one amidst innumerable foes, 571
 Where warriors like himself their strength compose.
 If thou my words approve, a message send
 To Christian Charles, that mutual strife may end,
 He for the list shall name his boldest knight 575
 Who dares encounter thine in equal fight,
 Till one may fall—that king shall tribute pay,
 Whose champion, slain or vanquish'd, yields the day.
 Nor Charles I trust (whate'er his arms have won)
 Will proffer'd peace on such conditions shun. 580
 With these persuasive words Sobrino mov'd
 Th' assembled peers; the peers th' advice approv'd.
 That day th' important embassy they frame,
 That day to Charles the chosen envoys came:
 When Charles, who knew what warriors of renown 585
 Maintain'd his quarrel, deem'd the prize his own.
 Then to Rinaldo he the combat gave,
 Whom next Orlando, bravest of the brave,

He trusted most—Meantime, on either hand,
 The truce was welcom'd by each martial band. 590
 With labours spent, with anxious cares oppress'd,
 They hail the hour that promis'd future rest;
 And curs'd that discord (bane of human good)
 Which urg'd their souls to hate, their hands to blood.

Rinaldo thus with honour'd preference grac'd 595
 Above his peers, in whom his sovereign plac'd
 The charge his empire and his fame to guard,
 Exulting for the glorious' list prepar'd;
 Nor fear'd Rogero's arm might his excel,
 Though by that arm stern Mandricardo fell. 600

But good Rogero, while his soul confess'd
 His monarch's favour, singled from the rest;
 Yet look'd with downcast eyes of heavy cheer,
 Though, unappall'd, his bosom knew not fear.
 Rinaldo had he scorn'd, and with him join'd 605
 Orlando's self; but, ah! his troubled mind
 View'd in his foe a warrior near ally'd
 To noble Bradamant, his future bride;
 His best belov'd—who oft, with anguish mov'd,
 In tender lines his breach of faith reprov'd: 610
 And should he thus her future hopes requite,
 To meet her brother now in mortal fight,

Such

Such change to hatred must her bosom feel,
As all his cares could ne'er suffice to heal.

If to himself Rogero mourns in vain 615

The part that Heaven has call'd him to sustain,
Soon as the flying news his fair one hears,
Sighs follow sighs, her eyes are fill'd with tears:

She strikes her lovely breast, her golden hairs
She rends away, her bloodless cheek she tears: 620

She calls Rogero perjur'd and ingrate,
And, loud lamenting, weeps her cruel fate;
Whate'er event should chance on either side,
To her, in every chance, must woe betide.

But now the rival knights, with equal care, 625

Their weapons for th' expected list prepare:
The choice of weapons to the chief remains,
Whose valiant arm the Roman cause maintains;

And he, who since his gallant steed he lost,
Still fought on foot amid th' embattled host, 630

Resolves, in plate and mail, on foot to engage,
With ax and dagger keen the fight to wage;

And near the walls of Arli's ancient seat,
They choose a spacious plain for combat meet.

Aurora scarce had rais'd her watchful head 635

Above the waves from old Tithonus' bed,

And usher' in the day that seem'd decreed
 To see the victor crown'd, the vanquish'd bleed,
 When, lo ! on either hand, with equal care
 A chosen squadron to the field repair : 640
 They pitch the tents in due-proportion'd space,
 And near the tents two rising altars place.
 Ere long, in order marshall'd train by train,
 The Pagan forces issued to the plain :
 Full in the midst, in barbarous splendor drest, 645
 Proud Afric's king a fiery courser press'd ;
 His colour bay, his skin was glossy bright,
 Black was his mane, two feet and front were white.
 Beside the king his steed Rogero rein'd ;
 Nor him to attend Marfilius' self disdain'd, 650
 Whose hand the helmet held, so late in fight
 With peril conquer'd from the Tartar knight;
 That helmet, once in Trojan battles borne,
 A thousand years ago by Hector worn.

Then issuing from their works in shining swarms
 Imperial Charles conducts his troops in arms, 656
 In blazing pomp and military show,
 As if on equal terms to engage a foe.
 His noble Paladins their lord enclose,
 And near him arm'd the bold Rinaldo goes, 660
 Arm'd

Arm'd save his head—that helmet which of yore
 In fatal combat fam'd Mambrino wore,
 The Danish Paladin Ugero bears :
 Duke Namus next beside the knight appears ;
 One ax he holds, of two for fight ordain'd, 665
 One royal Salomone's hand sustain'd.
 Here various chiefs the Christian squadrons led,
 And there the powers of Spain and Afric spread.
 Between the camps was left an ample space,
 Where, save the champions, none the fatal place 670
 Must dare to tread—the trumpet's dreadful breath
 For each offence denouncing certain death.
 The Christian warrior first, prepar'd for fight,
 His weapon seiz'd, and next the Pagan knight :
 When now, advanc'd before the martial bands, 675
 Two priests appear'd, each bearing in his hands
 A volume clos'd : one hallow'd page proclaim'd
 CHRIST's blameless life : the Koran one was nam'd :
 With that, the emperor came, devout in mien ;
 With this, the Pagan Agramant was seen : 680
 Imperial Charles before his altar stay'd,
 And thus with lifted hands to Heaven he pray'd.
 O God ! who could'st in flesh resign thy breath
 To save devoted souls from sin and death !

O Virgin pure ! from whom, for our frail sake, 685
 That God vouchsaf'd a human form to take,
 Be witness now, that for myself I swear,
 And each that may henceforth this sceptre bear,
 To Agramant, and all whose future hand
 Shall hold the rule of his paternal land, 690
 Of finest gold an annual sum to pay,
 Should here my chosen champion lose the day :
 And more—I swear to fix a peace so sure
 As may to time's remotest verge endure.
 If this I fail, let each offended power 695
 On me, on mine, the heaviest vengeance shower,
 But spare my people—here thy wrath let fall,
 Nor stretch, for my offence, thy scourge to all.
 Yet to the world a dread example show,
 What punishment awaits the broken vow. 700

Thus while he pray'd, he grasp'd the sacred book
 With pious zeal, and upwards fix'd his look.
 And now they pass'd to where, with splendor grac'd,
 The Pagan train a second altar plac'd :
 There vow'd king Agramant to waft his powers 705
 Through midland waters back to Afric's shores,
 And tribute to the Christian monarch yield,
 Should brave Rogero vanquish'd press the field ;

And bid (as Charles had sworn) all hatred cease,
To bind the solemn league with lasting peace. 710

The Pagan then, amidst the listening crowd,
His prophet Mahomet invoc'd aloud,
And on the book to observe his oath he swore,
The book which in his hand the Pontiff bore.

Then from the altars sworn each prince withdrew
Back to his train; when from the martial crew 716
The noble champions, ere in fight they join'd,
Advanc'd with mutual oaths themselves to bind.

Rogero swore, if heedless of the right
His monarch should disturb th' approaching fight, 720
No longer to confess his sovereign sway,
As chief or peer, but only Charles obey.
Then vow'd Rinaldo, if the Christian lord
Should the first cause to break the truce afford,
Thenceforth for sovereign Agramant to own, 725
His future knight and guard of Afric's throne.

Now all perform'd, as solemn rites requir'd,
Each champion backward to the lines retir'd,
To wait the sign—when soon resounding far
The shrill-mouth'd trumpet gave the peal of war. 730
The fight begins—loud strokes are echo'd round;
Now high, now low, the brandish'd weapons found.

Above,

Above, beneath, the thundering ax is sped ;
Now aim'd against the breast, and now the head.
Their strife is such, no words suffice to praise 735
The matchless skill that either arm displays,
But good Rogero, who the brother fought
Of her whose love possess'd his every thought,
So cautious struck, his caution seem'd to show
A strength inferior to his gallant foe ; 740
Readier to ward than strike, he seldom aim'd a blow. }

Rinaldo, not with doubts like these distressed,
On conquest bent, his brave opponent press'd
With utmost nerve ; his ax of temper steel'd,
Now here, now there, in rapid circles wheel'd : 745
At head or breast he aim'd, while still prepar'd
On every side the threatening stroke to ward,
Rogero mov'd ; but when a stroke he dealt,
The cautious stroke Rinaldo little felt.
Anxious the Pagan lords the knights survey, 750
Who seem'd ill-pair'd for such a glorious day.
The king of Afric pale, with alter'd hue
Bent on the doubtful fight his fearful view,
And now on old Sobrino turn'd the blame ;
Whose erring counsel risk'd a nation's fame. 755

THE
NINETEENTH BOOK
OF
O R L A N D O.

THE ARGUMENT.

MELISSA, in the form of Rodomont, incites Agramant to break the truce. A general battle ensues, and the two knights separate by mutual agreement. Valour of Bradamant and Marphisa. Proceedings of Astolpho in Africa. The leaves of trees transformed to ships. Arrival of Olivero, Sanfonetto, Brandimart, and other Christian knights, who had been taken by Rodomont at the bridge. Arrival of Flordelis; her meeting with Brandimart. Orlando, in his madness, wandering from place to place, is, by a strange chance, thrown on the coast of Africa, near the camp of Astolpho, by whom he is restored to his senses. Biserta besieged and taken. Valour of Brandimart. The Pagan army in France being routed by Bradamant and Marphisa, Agramant escapes on board his ship, and with part of his fleet sails from the port of Arli for Africa: he is met by Dudon's fleet, that attacks him unawares during the night, and burns and destroys most of his ships. Agramant, with Sobrino, makes his escape. Despair of Agramant. He meets with Gradasso, who engages to fight in his cause. A messenger is sent to Orlando, in the names of Agramant, Gradasso, and Sobrino, to challenge him and two more knights. Orlando accepts the challenge.

THE
NINETEENTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

BUT sage Meliffa, that eternal source
Of magic power controlling nature's course,
Now cast aside her female form, and took
The king of Algier's habit, voice and look :
Like haughty Rodomont her arms she wore,
Like him a dragon's speckled hide she wore ;
Like him she seem'd her pointed lance to wield,
So hung her sword, so gleam'd her bossy shield :
A demon, in a courser's shape, she rode,
And sudden piercing through the wondering crowd, 10
Before Troyano's pensive son she press'd,
And, frowning, thus with thundering voice address'd:
 I have you judg'd, O king ! with such a knight
To match a stripling warrior, raw in fight ;

In

In such an arm so rashly to confide, 15
For what must Afric's weal and crown decide.
Haste—stay the combat—on whose issue wait
Disgrace and ruin to yourself and state.

'Tis Rodomont that speaks—attend no more
To keep the truce or oath you madly swore. 20
Unsheath the sword; let every valiant hand
Enforce its edge on yon devoted band.
Lo! I am here—and each amid your host
May now the vigour of a hundred boast.

Thus she: unwary Agramant approv'd, 25
And forth he rush'd, with headlong fury mov'd:
The lying form of Sarza's monarch wrought
Such sudden change, he banish'd from his thought
The treaty made; nor had he priz'd so high
A thousand warriors as this sole ally. 30
Behold on every side with eager speed
They couch the spear, and spur the foamy steed:
Melissa, when her arts had mix'd in fight
The jarring nations, vanish'd from the sight.
The champions, who the growing tumult saw, 35
The lifts disturb'd against all martial law,
With-held their strokes, and join'd their friendly hands,
Till time should tell what fury mix'd the bands

In impious strife, and whence the breach had sprung,
 From ancient Charles, or Agramant the young. 40
 Wild uproar now succeeds—and shouting loud
 Here forward press, there backward shrink the crowd.
 One act alike is honour or disgrace,
 And stamps alike the valiant and the base.
 Alike, on every side, in heaps they run, 45
 But these to meet, and those the fight to shun.

As when a well-breath'd hound impatient views
 A beast swift flying which the pack pursues :
 He hears the dogs, he pants to join the train ;
 His lord forbids it, and he pants in vain : 50
 So, with her noble friend, Marphisa's breast
 Till then the feelings of the brave confess'd ;
 Till then the pair with deep regret survey'd
 Each mighty host in idle pomp array'd ;
 And oft repin'd to think the solemn day 55
 Forbade their arms to invade so rich a prey.
 But now, the league dissolv'd, they gladly flew
 To fate their warmth on Afric's warring crew.
 Her spear Marphisa through the foremost sent ;
 His breast it pierc'd and issued at a vent 60
 Two feet behind ; her falchion then she took,
 And four strong helmets shatter'd at the stroke.

Not

Not with less valour Bradamant engag'd,
Though with her golden lance the virgin wag'd
A different fight, while all to earth she threw, 65
But not a warrior by her weapon flew.

Thus, side by side, the pair undaunted fought,
And witness'd each what deeds the other wrought :
Fill, parting soon, they took a separate course,
As anger drove them on the Moorish force : 70

While Afric's legions shrunk with chilling fear,
Where that the falchion wielded, this the spear.
Thus where on Apennine soft breezes blow,
And verdant turf the heights ascending show,
Two rolling torrents rush with sweepy sway, 75
And from the summit take divided way :

They whirl huge stones, from craggy hills uprear
The towering trees, and to the vallies bear
The labourer's hope, and strive with rageful force
Which most shall scatter ruin in its course. 80

King Agramant can scarce the troops detain
Around his standard, and their flight restrain.
He calls aloud—he turns—intrepid stands
To brave the foe, and Rodomont demands.
Impell'd by him, he deem'd his fame betray'd ; 85
The solemn league dissolv'd, so lately made ;

His Gods profan'd—while he, for whom he broke
 All ties of honour, now his fight forsook :
 Nor yet Sobrino he beheld, for fled
 In Arli's walls Sobrino vèil'd his head ; 90
 Abjur'd the deed, and in his fears divin'd
 Some plague that day by righteous Heaven assign'd }
 To punish guilt of such an impious kind.
 With him Marsilius to the town retir'd,
 Such dread religion in their souls inspir'd. 95
 Thus Agramant can ill th' assault sustain
 Of royal Charles, conducting in his train
 The English, German, and Italian name,
 All valiant chiefs, and men of mighty fame.
 With these the Paladins their station hold, 100
 Like sparkling jewels set on tissued gold ;
 And, join'd to these, were knights of high renown,
 Whose praise in arms thro' all the world was blown ;
 Guido, whose worth his noble deeds declare ;
 And Olivero's sons *, a dauntless pair. 105

Meantime in Afric king Branzardo rose
 With all his force to meet the Christian foes,
 And Nubia's strength ; with him the feeble train
 Of Algazieri's king † was join'd in vain :

* GRYPHON and AQUILANT. † BUCIFARO.

Such motley succours, as in haste supply'd, 110
 Through all her kingdom Afric could provide
 Of every kind, were mix'd without regard;
 The levies scarce old age or females spar'd:
 For Agramant, to vengeance bent, had train'd
 With two descents on France his native land: 115
 Her strength exhausted thus, the remnant few
 Compos'd a heartless and unwarlike crew:
 And such they prov'd; for when with distant sight
 They view'd the foe, they turn'd their backs in
 flight
 (Like timorous herds) before the Christian knight.
 With Pagans slain Astolpho heap'd the ground, 121
 But some their safety in Biserta found.
 Brave Bucifaro prisoner then remain'd:
 The sheltering city king Branzardo gain'd,
 Who deeply mourn'd for Bucifaro's fate, 125
 A loss not little to the public state.
 Large was Biserta, and requir'd his care
 Against a siege her bulwarks to repair:
 Ill could he this pursue without the aid
 Of Algazieri's king; and oft he weigh'd 130
 The hapless prince's loss, while, deep distress,
 A thousand cares lay brooding in his breast.

At length he call'd to mind a Danish knight
 Whom many a month, a prisoner made in fight,
 He held in bonds, and Dudon was his name: 135
 Near Monaco him Sarza's king o'ercame,
 When first to France he cross'd from Afric's shore: }
 The Paladin from that disastrous hour
 Remain'd a captive in Branzardo's power. }
 For Bucifaro now Branzardo meant 140
 To exchange the Dane, and trusty envoys sent
 To Nubia's chief, for o'er the Nubian bands,
 By spies he knew that England's duke commands;
 And deem'd he gladly would such terms receive,
 A Paladin from bondage to relieve: 145
 Nor err'd the prince, since good Astolpho clos'd
 With king Branzardo for th' exchange propos'd.

Dudon, releas'd, the gentle duke repaid
 With grateful thanks; and now companions made
 In glorious toils, in counsel both unite, 150
 And plan by land and sea the future fight.

Astolpho, next revolving in his thought
 What from the holy sage in charge he brought,
 To take Provence and all the neighbouring strand
 Of Acquamorta from the Pagan's hand, 154

Which late they won ; he from his numerous train
Selects the soldiers that might best sustain
New toils and dangers on the gulphy main. }

Then either hand with gather'd leaves he fill'd,
Which laurels, cedars, palms, and olives yield : 160

Beside the margin of the seas he stood,
And cast the foliage in the dashing flood.

O wonder ! scarce by human faith believ'd !
Soon as the waves the scatter'd leaves receiv'd,
These swell'd in bulk, and (miracle to view !) 165

Each long, and large, and curv'd, and heavy grew.

The fibres small to cables chang'd appear'd,

The larger veins in solid masts were rear'd ;

One end the prow, and one the steerage show'd,
Till each a perfect ship the billows rode. 170

In equal number now the tides they sweep,

As leaves before were scatter'd on the deep.

Strange was the sight, as these in turn became

Barks, galleys, transports, every various name

That forms a fleet ; with compass, oars, and sails, 175

Prepar'd to stem the surge and catch the gales.

Nor fail'd the duke such skilful hands to find

As oft were wont to dare the storm and wind.

Corfians and Sardians, bred to plough the wave,

His pilots, masters, and his seamen gave. 180

Embark'd

Embark'd full twenty thousand quit the land
 Of every kind, o'er whom the chief command
 Brave Dudon held, whose name to none would yield
 For skill at sea, or courage in the field.

While near the coast the fleet at anchor lay, 185
 Awaiting winds to speed them on their way,
 From distant lands a vessel reach'd the shore
 That many a luckless warrior captive bore.
 Those knights she brought, who at the risk of life
 Prov'd on the narrow bridge th' unequal strife; 190
 Whom haughty Rodomont awhile detain'd,
 Then doom'd to lie in foreign dungeons chain'd,
 With these the kinsman * of the earl was found,
 And Sanfonetto, Brandimart renown'd;
 With more, whose titles need not here a place, 195
 Of Gascon, German, or Italian race.
 The pilot, driven before th' impetuous wind,
 Had left his destin'd Algiers far behind;
 And now, unconscious of the lurking foes,
 Not fearing danger, to the bay he goes; 200
 There peaceful thinks among his friends to rest,
 As Progne flies to her loquacious nest.
 But when he saw th' imperial eagle fly,
 The golden lily and the leopards nigh,

* OLIVERO.

The frighted colour from his features fled ; 205
 As one who, unawares, with heedless tread,
 Has crush'd a snake, that swoln with poison lay
 In slumber roll'd amid the grassy way :
 Trembling and pale he flies the venom'd pest
 That darts his tongue and rears his sanguine crest, 210
 In vain the pilot would regain the deep,
 Or in his hold the captive warriors keep.
 Brave Brandimart and Olivero freed,
 With Sansonetto, from the deck proceed
 To greet the generous duke and Dudon brave, 215
 Who to their friends a cordial welcome gave ;
 While him, whose ship the noble prisoners bore,
 They doom'd for penance to the labouring oar.

Great Otho's son * within his tent receiv'd
 The warlike guests, with welcome rest reliev'd ; 220
 With needful food, with arms and vests supply'd,
 What want might claim, or friendship could provide.
 With these to waste awhile the social hour
 In pleasing converse, Dudon near the shore
 Detain'd his fleet, and deem'd the time delay'd 225
 With such distinguish'd warriors well repaid,
 Of these he heard whate'er of late befel
 To Charles or France ; by these instructed well

* ASTOLPHO.

Where

Where best prepar'd his navy's strength to bend,
To guard the faithful, and the foes offend. 230

Now, on a palfrey pacing swift, they view
A comely dame in robes of sable hue,
Who strait to Brandimart impatient goes,
And round his neck her eager arms she throws.
This dame was Flordelis, whose gentle breast 235
Long mourn'd her lord by ruthless force oppress'd,
Till through the deep her fearless course she bore,
To seek the captive knight on Algiers' shore.

But ere she parted from Marseilles, she found
A foreign ship from eastern climates bound 240
That brought a sage, who many years had told,
In royal Monodantes household old ;

Who, various parts explor'd from land to land,
Now sought his Brandimart on Gallia's strand.
She knew Bardino in the hoary sage, 245
Who long had bred her lord in early age.

His cause of travel known, the faithful fair
Urg'd him with hers to join his pious care,
And told how Brandimart, to Afric sent,
A wretched prisoner in Algiers was pent. 250

When Flordelis her dearest lord beheld,
Her eager speed, by heart-felt love impell'd,

Declar'd her secret joy; a joy that rose
To greater height from sense of former woes.
The gentle knight who equal rapture prov'd, 255
To see that wife o'er every blessing lov'd,
With equal warmth to meet the fair-one press'd,
Receiv'd, embrac'd and held her to his breast,
On her dear lips imprinting many a kiss;
Nor soon had sated with the guiltless bliss, 260
But lifting up his eyes, by chance he view'd
Where near the dame his old Bardino stood.
He stretch'd his hand, preparing to embrace,
And ask what fortune from his native place
Had drawn him thus——when sudden deep alarms
Of rattling drums rous'd all the camp to arms, 266
Astolpho with his noble comrades press'd
Their ready steeds, and to the sound address'd;
With wondering looks enquiring as they pass'd
Whence came the tumult, till they view'd at last 270
A savage man, who naked and alone
Had all the camp in wild disorder thrown.
Grasp'd in his hand a club he brandish'd, rude
With frequent knots, of firm well-season'd wood;
Where'er it fell, each wretch that felt the blows 275
Lay stretch'd on earth nor soon recovering rose.

A hundred

A hundred had his senseless fury slain,
All strength was fruitless, all resistance vain,
While here and there the scatter'd arrows light,
None daring near advance in closer fight. 280

Astolpho, Dudon, Brandimart amaz'd,
With Olivero, on the savage gaz'd ;
Drawn by the noise they came, and speechless stand
To see the prowess of a single hand.

When Flordelis beheld with heedful eyes 285

The strange assailant—Lo! the earl (she cries)—
Him last she saw, when on the bridge he stood
With Sarza's prince in conflict o'er the flood.

At once Astolpho near with earnest view
Survey'd, and soon his lov'd Orlando knew, 290
By tokens, which the fainted three *, who dwell'd
In earthly Paradise, to him reveal'd :

Else had the generous warrior ne'er explor'd
In such a form Anglantes' courteous lord,
Who long distraught, thus wild and savage ran, 295
And to the wretched brute debas'd the man.

When mad Orlando left the Pagan † knight,
Who on the bridge maintain'd so strange a fight,
From land to land he rov'd, and where he past,
With senseless fury laid the country waste. 300

* St. JOHN, ENOCH and ELIAS.

† RODOMONT.

A steed he cours'd along the sandy plain,
 At length he seiz'd him by the flowing mane,
 Then mounting, urg'd him many a weary mile,
 Nor gave a moment's respite to his toil :
 To Zizera he now pursu'd his way, 305
 That near the straits of Zibilterra lay :
 There, loosen'd from the strand, a bark he view'd,
 That skimm'd the surface of the tranquil flood :
 To reach the bark Orlando drives the steed,
 And to the sea impels his frantic speed ; 310
 The beast reluctant enters in the waves,
 Long vainly struggling ; now the water laves
 His knees and chest, now swells on either side,
 And scarce his head appears above the tide ;
 Till all unequal to the watery strife, 315
 He ends at once his swimming and his life,
 While Fortune, that o'er madmen still presides,
 To Afric's shore the wretched maniac guides,
 And lands him safe, where stretch'd along the coast,
 Encamp'd in swarthy bands Astolpho's host. 320

Astolpho, by his starting tear confess'd
 The tender feelings of a generous breast,
 To Dudon then and Olivero near
 He turn'd and said—Behold Orlando here !

These

These bending on the hapless earl their view, 325

At length in him their long lost champion knew;

Alike beholding, with surprize and grief,

A state that seem'd so hopeless of relief.

Of all the warlike peers were few but show'd

Th' infectious sorrow which their cheeks o'erflow'd: 330

To whom Astolpho thus—No longer waste

The time in plaints, but rather let us haste

To work his cure—he said, and left his steed;

The rest forfook their seats with equal speed.

Now Brandimart by Sanfonetto stood, 335

With holy Dudon, Olivero show'd

A ready zeal, and all at once drew near

With force combin'd to seize the madding peer.

Orlando, who the shining band perceiv'd

That hemm'd him round, his knotty weapon heav'd 340

With twofold strength, and, lo! as Dudon spread

The fencing shield to guard his daring head,

And nearer drew, the club descending weigh'd

His buckler down, but Olivero's blade

Met half the blow, which else so fiercely driven 345

Through shield and helm the mortal wound had given.

The shield it broke, the helm its fury found;

And Dudon lay extended on the ground.

At

At once his falchion Sanfonetto drew,
With swift descent the well-aim'd weapon flew, 350
And cleft the madman's ponderous mace in two. }
Now Brandimart behind Orlando plac'd,
With either arm in strictest grasp embrac'd
His heaving flank : his legs Astolpho took,
While to and fro enrag'd Orlando shook 355
The valiant pair, till with resistless might
Ten paces off he threw the English knight,
Who backward fell : but still in vain he strove
From Brandimart's tenacious grasp to move.
With forward step as Olivero came, 360
His hand the madman clench'd with furious aim,
And sent him pale to earth, while drench'd in blood
His mouth and nostrils pour'd a purple flood.
Strong was the helm that fury to sustain ;
That fury else had Olivero slain : 365
Yet prone he fell, and look'd like one in death,
Who yields to Paradise his fleeting breath.
Astolpho now and Dudon rose, who press'd
The earth so late ; but Dudon still confess'd
His blow receiv'd—again erect they stood, 370
With Sanfonetto, who the knotted wood
So strongly cleft : all three their forces join'd :
Brave Dudon then with matchless strength behind

Orlando

Orlando held; while with his foot in vain
 The madman strove to cast him on the plain. 375
 The rest his arms confin'd, but uncontroll'd
 His nervous arms soon burst their strongest hold.
 Whoe'er perchance in some wide field has view'd
 By dogs and men a stately bull pursu'd,
 That, bellowing loud, as here and there he wheels, 380
 In either ear the fangs indented feels:
 So seem'd Orlando, more than mortal strong,
 So drew with ease those mighty chiefs along.
 But Olivero soon the ground forsook,
 Where stretch'd he lay beneath the madman's stroke;
 And sudden bade th' assistant train provide 386
 Strong lengths of cord, with running nooses ty'd:
 These round Orlando's legs and arms he threw:
 The distant ends among the warlike crew
 He gave, and each with force the cables drew. 390 }
 As some large steed or ox, which swains surround
 With rustic toils, is headlong drawn to ground;
 So fell the earl — All rush'd with eager haste,
 Compress'd his hands and feet, and bound them fast.
 Thus prostrate laid, in vain Orlando strove 395
 Now here, now there, his fetter'd limbs to move.
 Astolpho bade remove the senseless knight:
 When Dudon, large of bone, of finewy might,

The earl uplifting on his shoulder laid,
And to the sea th' enormous weight convey'd. 406
Seven times Astolpho will'd his limbs to lave,
Seven times to plunge him in the briny wave,
Till from his face and body, black by toil
In parching suns, they wash'd the fetid soil.
With herbs collected then (in vain oppos'd 408
By struggling breath) the madman's mouth he clos'd,
That not a passage might for air remain,
Save through the nostrils leading to the brain.
And now Astolpho in his hand sustain'd
The vessel that Orlando's wit contain'd : 410
Beneath his nostrils this with nicest care
He held unstopp'd, when (wondrous to declare)
With air inhal'd the breath returning drew
The subtle wit, that from the prison flew
Back to its native seat, nor left behind 415
A single atom of th' ethereal mind ;
But more enlarg'd his manly soul is grown,
With eloquence and wisdom scarce his own.
As one, whose sense by noxious dreams oppress'd,
Sees horrid forms disturb his broken rest ; 420
Monsters unknown ! or in his troubled thought
Has some strange deed of dreadful import wrought,
Even

Even when he wakes, his phantom-fears remain,
 And still the vision haunts his teeming brain:
 So when his reason had resum'd her sway, 425
 Orlando long in stupid wonder lay:
 On Brandimart, on England's valiant lord,
 Whose pious care his better self restor'd;
 On valiant Olivero, with a look
 Of deepest thought he gaz'd, nor silence broke: 430
 He marvell'd when his naked limbs he spy'd
 From head to foot with cords so firmly ty'd:
 At length he spoke, as in the cavern'd shade
 To those who bound him once Silenus said—
 Release me, friends—and with such courteous mien
 He spoke, and look'd with features so serene, 436
 They loos'd his bands, and heedful to provide
 For every want, with covering vests supply'd.
 While all alike their friendly influence join'd
 To sooth the anguish of a noble mind, 440
 For actions past, that left a sting behind.

Orlando, heal'd of every love-sick care,
 The dame whom once he deem'd so good, so fair,
 So highly priz'd, he now esteems no more,
 But scorns those charms he held so dear before; 445
 And every wish he bends to efface the shame
 Which love had cast on all his former fame.

Meanwhile

Meanwhile to Brandimart Bardino said,
 That Monodant, his royal father dead,
 He from his brother Gigliantes came, 450
 And all the lands that own'd his rightful claim,
 (Nations that dwell amid the scatter'd isles
 Which cheerful Phœbus gilds with evening smiles)
 To invite his steps to realms beyond compare
 With every other, peopled, rich, and fair : 455
 Submitted now to him, the rightful heir. }
 Then Brandimart reply'd—His force to prove,
 In aid of Charles, and for Orlando's love,
 The sword he drew, nor would the cause forego,
 Till Heaven should reconcile the Pagan foe: 460
 The war once done, hereafter might he weigh
 The duties of his own paternal sway.

Next morn the Danish * leader to the shore
 Of fair Provence his vast Armada bore.
 From England's duke Orlando learns the state 465
 Of Afric's war, and oft in deep debate
 Employs the time, bids stronger siege enclose
 Biserta's town, but on the duke bestows
 The praise of all, while yet the noble duke
 From Brava's warrior every counsel took; 470

* DUDON.

Who

Who urg'd her walls and bulwarks to destroy,
That never more her power might France annoy.
Thus fix'd; the third ensuing day was nam'd
To assault the town, and thro' the camp proclaim'd.
With duke Aftolpho many ships remain'd 475
To assist the siege, from Dudon's fleet detain'd :
Of these he made brave Sansonetto guide,
A chief by sea and land of courage try'd ;
Who now with these against Biserta stood,
And, from the port a mile, at anchor rode. 480

Aftolpho and Orlando, who, with mind
Of Christian frame, no enterprize design'd
Heaven unimplor'd, bade through the camp declare
By herald's voice a day for fast and prayer ;
Exhorting each, the third returning light, 485
To wait prepar'd the signal for the fight,
With fire and sword to storm Biserta's town,
And heave her buildings from the lowest stone.

When now the host from morn till eve had pray'd,
And every due of pure devotion paid, 490
All those, in blood or friendship bound, invite
Each other to partake the festive rite :
Their languid bodies then refresh'd with food,
They wept, embrac'd, and such their actions show'd,

Their looks, their words, as dearest friends that part,
When thoughts of absence rend the feeling heart. 496
Within Biserta's walls the priests no less,
'Midst thronging numbers, to the temple press:
They beat their breasts, to Macon they complain,
But Macon hears not, and their plaints are vain. 500
What prayers are offer'd, and what alms bestow'd
By each apart! what public gifts are vow'd
Of statues, fanes, and altars, to disclose
In future times their past and present woes!
Now by their Cadi blest, in arms prepar'd, 505
The people rush their city's walls to guard.

In Tython's bed still fair Aurora lies,
And darkness still o'erspreads the morning skies,
When there Aftolpho, Sanfonetto here,
In armour sheath'd before their ranks appear. 510
Orlando now the signal gives, and all
Advance with eager speed to attack the wall.

Meanwhile Aftolpho to the foremost place
Assign'd the king * who rul'd the fable race.
Forward they rush to shake the trembling towers. 515
With fierce assault—so thick the mingled showers
From twanging bows, from slings and engines rain,
That scarce the Pagans can the storm sustain.

* SENAPUS.

All toil, as if on each was plac'd the war,
 And stones, and beams, with strength unceasing bear :
 These in the fosse they cast, where deep below 521
 The waters drain'd an oozy bottom show.
 The Nubian bands, allur'd with thirst of prey,
 Beneath the tortoise urg'd their daring way :
 Huge battering rams and vast machines they bore, 525
 To burst the gate, and shake the solid tower ;
 Beneath the walls they pour'd compact and strong,
 Nor unprovided found the Pagan throng.
 These, from on high, fire, darts, and javelins throw,
 And ponderous stones, and rafters send below. 530
 The thundering tempest falls, and batters down
 The planks of engines rais'd against the town.
 Much toil and pain the Christian bands endure
 The first assault, while glooms the air obscure :
 But when the sun in eastern splendor burns, 535
 Then changing Fortune from the Pagan turns.
 Brave Sanfonetto with his naval power
 The port has enter'd, and possess'd the shore :
 With bows and slings he galla the foes from far,
 And every engine fram'd for missive war ; 540
 And darts, and spears, and scaling-ladders sends
 (Whate'er his ships supply) to aid his friends.

Orlando, Olivero, and the knight *

Who late in air sustain'd so bold a flight,
With Brandimart, a fierce assault maintain, 545
Far from the sea, and next the upland plain.

The host is fram'd in four well-order'd bands,
And each brave chief himself a fourth commands :
Walls, gates, they storm ; alike they press the foe,
And shining proofs of dauntless courage show. 550
Here towers of wood are driven on wheels ; and there
Vast elephants, inur'd the weight to bear,
Plac'd on their backs huge castles lift so high,
That far beneath the hostile ramparts lie.

Lo ! Brandimart a scaling-ladder rears 555
Against the wall, and, mounting, others cheers :
His bold example many chiefs pursue,
For who would pause with such a guide in view ?
Brave Brandimart to reach the height intent,
Fights as he mounts, and wins the battlement : 560
With hand and foot he strives, till with a bound
He treads the works, and whirls his falchion round ;
He drives, o'erturns, he scatters, thrusts, and cleaves,
And many a proof of matchless valour leaves.
But sudden with its freight (a dreadful sight) 565
The ladder breaks, and headlong from the height,

* ASTOLPHO.

Save

Save Brandimart, the bold assailants fall,
Each pil'd on each beneath the well-fought wall.
Still Brandimart maintains his glorious heat,
Nor bends his thought a moment to retreat ; 570
Though far beneath his followers lie o'erthrown,
Himself a mark to all the hostile town.
His anxious friends entreat him to return ;
In vain they call—he hears with generous scorn.
Lo ! from the walls, full thirty yards in height, 575
Within the city leaps the fearless knight ;
Unharm'd he lights, as if his fall to meet
Soft down or turf were stretch'd beneath his feet.
Now here, now there, he pours with generous ire ;
Now these, now those, before his face retire. 580
His friends, without, think all relief too late
To avert his death, and yield him up to fate.
Soon Fame, with restless wing, loquacious flew :
Orlando first the warrior's danger knew ;
Th' unwelcome news then spread to Otho's son, 585
And Olivero last—all fearless run,
Orlando first—each for a ladder calls,
With emulation each ascends the walls ;
With such fierce semblance, and with looks so bold,
The withering Pagans tremble to behold. 590

As 'midst the seas, when rattling winds prevail,
The roaring floods th' endanger'd bark assail;
And now the prow and now the poop engage,
To force their passage with tempestuous rage;
Pale stands the pilot who should help supply, 595
He groans—he sighs—his art and courage die;
Till through a breach one wave its entrance speeds,
And, where it enters, wave to wave succeeds;
So when these noble three the ramparts gain'd,
An easy conquest for the rest remain'd; 600
Dauntless they press, and raise on every side
A thousand ladders to the works apply'd.
The battering rams with crumbling ruin shake
The jointed stones, and many an opening make.
Thus, pour'd through more than one defenceless part,
Assistance came to noble Brandimart. 606
As when the king of floods, with deepening roar,
In sudden deluge bursts his sounding shore;
Wide o'er the field his rushing tide is borne,
The furrows drowns and sweeps the ripen'd corn; 610
Whole flocks and sheep-cotes by the stream are tost,
And dogs and shepherds in the waters lost;
While wondering fish amid the branches glide,
Where birds could late the yielding air divide:

With

With such a fury, where the walls disclose 615
A gaping breach, the martial current flows
Of shouting troops, with brandish'd sword and flame
To sink the remnant of the Pagan name.
Rapine and Murder, foul with gory stain,
And Avarice, thirsting for another's gain, 620
That stately city now in ruin lay,
The queen of Afric once and first in sway !
With slaughter'd men is heap'd the groaning ground :
Th' innumerable streams that flow from every wound
Swell to a pool, more dismal than the lake 625
Which, circling Dis, Cocytus' waters make.
From street to street the hungry flames aspire,
Domes, mosques, and portals feed the spreading fire :
The pillag'd dwellings groans and shrieks repeat,
And frequent hands the wretched bosom beat. 630
Behold with piles of costly treasure borne,
The victors through each mournful gate return ;
With vases fair, with vestments richly wrought,
And massy silver from the temples brought,
Snatch'd from their fabled Gods—Sad mothers here
Are dragg'd, and there the captive sons appear. 636
Behold, subjected to the victors' lust,
Matrons and maids—a thousand deeds unjust

To good Orlando told, but told in vain,
Which he nor duke Astolpho could restrain. 640
Brave Bucifaro, Algazieri's lord,
Was slain by gallant Olivero's sword:
All hopes of better fortune cast aside,
By his own weapon king Branzardo died;
And with three wounds in death was Fulvo laid, 645
Whom first the noble duke his prisoner made.
Meantime in Gallia, Agramant remain'd,
And all the perils of the day sustain'd,
While many a Pagan by Marfilus led,
And king Sobrino, to the city fled; 650
Each prince for safety hasten'd to his fleet,
Their safety doubtful while at land to meet.
By their example many a knight and lord,
Of Moorish nation, went with speed on board,
Still Agramant th' unequal combat bore; 655
But when he found his force avail'd no more,
He turn'd the reins, and yielding to his fate,
Pursu'd the ready way to Arli's gate.
Behind him Rabican, like lightening, came,
Impell'd by Bradamant, the noble dame, 660
Who glow'd with ardour for Rogero's sake
(So oft withheld) the Pagan's life to take.

Not

Not less Marphisa burn'd with fierce desire
To appease, with late revenge, her murder'd fire :
The goring rowels in her fiery steed 665
She drove, and by her own impell'd his speed :
But this, nor that, though borne on fury's wing,
Could in their course outstrip the flying king,
Who soon the city's closing gates attain'd,
And safely thence his anchoring vessels gain'd. 670
As when two generous leopards through the wood
(A beauteous pair) have long with speed pursu'd
The nimble goat or stag, return'd at length
Defrauded of their prey, with baffled strength,
They leave the tardy chase, and with disdain 675
Lament their force and swiftness urg'd in vain :
So seem'd the virgins, so with shame return'd,
And oft with sighs the Pagan's safety mourn'd ;
Nor ceas'd their rage, but on the remnant crew
Dispers'd in broken ranks again they flew ; 680
Now here, now there, their thundering weapons pour
On those that falling fall to rise no more.
What now avails the wretched bands to fly ;
When flight no longer safety can supply ?
For Agramant, to ensure retreat, had clos'd 685
The gates of Arli next the camp expos'd ;

While

While every bridge that o'er the Rhodan led,
 His friends destroy'd, and took from those who fled
 All hope—Ah! when a tyrant's need demands,
 Like worthless herds are held Plebeian bands. 690

Some in the stream, and some in seas are drown'd,
 And some with crimson torrents drench the ground,
 What numbers perish'd, on th' embattled plain

By Bradamant and by Marphisa slain!

Still through the region many a sign appears; 695
 Where Rhodan flows, her walls where Arli rears,
 The neighbouring fields are throng'd with sepulchres.

Now Agramant impatient gives command
 To launch the heaviest vessels from the strand;
 Yet some he left with lighter barks behind, 700
 To take the fugitives that wish'd to find
 Their safety in the sea; two days he stay'd,
 So long the adverse winds his fleet delay'd;
 The third he stretch'd his canvass to the gale,
 And hop'd for Afric's coast secure to sail. 705

But king Marfilius, with increasing dread,
 Beheld the blackening clouds around him spread;
 And fear'd at length his own paternal Spain
 Would all the remnant of the storm sustain;
 Then fought Valencia, and with anxious care 710
 Began his forts and castles to repair

For war, that seem'd himself and friends to threat,
From which himself and friends their ruin met.

Now Agramant for Afric bids expand

His sails, with ships ill-stor'd and thinly mann'd, 715

Few were his men, but not their sorrows few,

When looking back on Gallia's shores, they view

Three-fourths deserted of their wretched crew. }

One calls his sovereign proud ; one, cruel calls ;

Imprudent, one ; and, as it oft befalls 720

In times like these, each gladly would accuse,

But fear forbids the murmuring tongue to loose ;

Yet some there were, who met in secret, durst

On friendship's faith each other's feeling trust : 724

These vent their rage, while he, their wretched chief,

Thinks each his sovereign loves and shares his grief,

A king no face beholds without disguise,

And all he hears is flattery, fraud, and lyes.

The king of Afric, well-advis'd, forbore

To steer his yessels for Biserta's shore, 730

Since there he knew that all the hostile land

The Nubians held : but higher up the strand

Where rocks display'd a less impending steep,

He thinks-with winding course to stem the deep.

But soon his cruel destiny withstood 735

The sage intent the prudent leader show'd,

And

And brought th' Armada form'd by wondrous power
 Of gather'd leaves (that through the billows hoar
 Had sail'd for France) in dead of night to meet
 The tossing vessels of the Pagan fleet, 740
 'Midst murky clouds without a gleam of light,
 And unprovided for so fierce a fight.
 Nor yet king Agramant the tidings heard,
 That Otho's son with such a navy steer'd;
 Or had he heard, what faith would man bestow 745
 To tale so strange, that 'midst the seas could grow
 A hundred vessels from a slender bough.

Hence without fear he sail'd, nor deem'd to find
 A single ship to obstruct his course design'd;
 No watch, no centinel, was plac'd on high, 750
 To give him notice of a foe so nigh.
 Aftolpho's navy, well by Dudon stor'd
 With arms and mariners, and troops on board,
 At rising eve the Pagan vessels view'd,
 And favour'd by the darkening night pursu'd. 755
 The bulky ships, with such o'erbearing force,
 By winds propitious that impell'd their course,
 Amidst th' affrighted Saracens were sent,
 That plung'd within th' abyfs full many a vessel went.
 The Christians now their eager weapons ply'd: 760
 Flames flash'd with wreathy smoke on every side:

Huge

Huge stones were cast, and dire confusion swell'd
 The troubled ocean, that had ne'er beheld
 So fierce a tempest on his watery field. 764 }
 Brave Dudon's men, to whom by favouring Heaven
 Unwonted strength and dauntless hearts were given,
 (For, lo! the hour by righteous powers design'd
 To plague for past misdeeds the Pagan kind)
 Afar and near so well their arms employ'd,
 That Agramant could no defence provide: 770
 A cloud of arrows hiss'd above his head;
 Around him swords, and spears, and axes spread:
 Of size enormous many a ponderous stone
 Thundering from high, by mighty engines thrown,
 Through prow or steerage drove with crashing sway,
 And op'd to rushing waves a dreadful way. 776
 But most th' increasing fires annoy'd the foe,
 In kindling rapid, but in quenching slow.
 The wretched seamen would from danger run,
 But swifter rush on what they seek to shun. 780
 Some by the foe with murdering steel pursu'd,
 Leap headlong from the decks and swim the flood:
 Some while their nervous arms their weight sustain,
 Now here, now there, to save their lives would gain
 A friendly bark; the bark with numerous freight 785
 Already charg'd, rejects their added weight:

The cruel sword each clinging hand divides,
 The sever'd hand still grasps the vessel's sides,
 The shrieking owner sinks in crimson tides.
 Some seek by water to prolong their breath, 790
 Or, dying, perish by a milder death :
 Till, swimming long, when hope no more prevails,
 When strength decays apace, and courage fails,
 The thought of drowning, spite of former dread,
 Recals them to the flames from which they fled : 795
 Eager they seize some burning wreck, and loth
 To die of either death, they die of both.
 Some from the biting ax, or brandish'd spear,
 Back to the seas return with double fear ;
 Till scarce escap'd the fate they deem'd so nigh, 800
 A dart or stone o'ertakes them as they fly.

'Twas night ; and not a feeble glimmering shone,
 When first the Christians had th' assault begun :
 But soon as sulphur, pitch, and brimstone pour'd
 On side or stern the crackling ships devour'd, 805
 So clear each object seem'd reveal'd to view,
 As day from ocean's face the darkness drew.
 Then with a few the king his ship forsakes,
 And with the gallant Brigliadoro takes
 Whate'er he priz'd : a lighter bark receives 810
 The wretched prince ; in silent haste he cleaves

(Stealing

(Stealing from ship to ship) the troubled tides,
Till safe at distance from the foe he rides :
While far behind his wretched friends remain,
By Dudon thus with dreadful carnage slain. 815
Fire burns them; water drowns them, steel destroys,
And he, the cause of all their ruin, flies.
So flies king Agramant, and, in his fate
Sobrinno shares, with whom he mourns too late,
He once unheeding heard the sage foretel, 820
Th' impending ills that since too sure befel.
His frequent sighs Biferta's fate deplore,
The cause divin'd, when blazing from the shore,
He view'd the flames ; but when at full were known
The sufferings of his once imperial town, 825
Urg'd by despair, himself his life had clos'd,
But that Sobrinno such dire thought oppos'd.

Sobrinno thus—What could'st thou more bestow
To swell the triumph of thy haughty foe,
Than by thy death to give him hopes to gain 830
The quiet rule of Afric's wide domain ?
To him thy life, O king ! must this deny,
Thy life must cause of endless fears supply,
Long, long ere Afric shall his laws confess :
Thy death alone ensures his full success ; 835
That

That death which us of every hope deprives,

Of hope, the only good that now survives.

Yet live—thou still shalt happier hours employ

To turn our tears to smiles, our grief to joy.

If thou art lost—sure bondage is our fate,

840

And Afric mourns a tributary state.

If life thou wilt not for thyself prolong,

Yet live, O king, to save thy friends from wrong.

Th' Egyptian Soldan, whose dominions lie

So near thy own, will men and stores supply :

845

Ill must he brook, in Afric thus o'er-run,

To see the growing power of Pepin's son.

Thy kinsman Norandino will sustain

A war so just thy kingdom to regain :

And, would'st thou seek their aid, thou soon may'st find

In aid of thee Armenians, Turks combin'd,

851

With Medians, Persians, and Arabians join'd.

These soothing words the prudent sage address'd

To waken comfort in his sovereign's breast ;

But while with words his drooping lord he cheer'd,

In thought perchance far other end he fear'd.

856

The wretched state of him too well he knows,

How vain his hope, who, when by powerful foes

Opprest, beholds them seize his regal lands,

And flies for succour to Barbarian bands.

860

King

King Agramant, now steering from the west
With beaky prow, thro' dashing waves address'd
His foamy course, when sudden from the shore
A dreadful tempest rose with hollow roar :

The pilot, at the helm, aloft survey'd 865
The blackening skies, and instant thus he said.

I see a gathering storm whose threaten'd rage
Not all my art suffices to engage :

If you, O chiefs ! attend what I advise,
Near to the left a lonely island lies, 870
Where we secure may safe at anchor keep,
Till past the fury that o'erhangs the deep.

The king consenting, to the left they stand,
And safe from perils now, approach the land
Welcome to seamen worn with length of toil, 875
'Twixt Afric plac'd, and Vulcan's fiery soil.
In this small island not a cot was found ;
Pale juniper and myrtle shade the ground :
A pleasing solitude, from man remote,
Where breed the deer, the stag, the hare, and goat :
By few but fishers known ; here oft they came, 881
And cleansing from the ooze and' briny stream,
On lowly shrubs their humid nets they dry'd,
While fishes slept beneath the quiet tide.

Arriv'd, another vessel here they view'd, 885
Like them by fortune sheltering from the flood :
This the great king of Sericana bore,
Who late embarking, fail'd from Arli's shore ;
Who with Rinaldo late the fight maintain'd,
And his good courser, fam'd Bayardo, gain'd. 890
Together met, the kings with friendly grace
Receiv'd each other in a dear embrace.
For friends of old, and in one cause combin'd,
Before proud Paris' walls in arms they shin'd.
With deep concern Gradasso heard the fate 895
Of Agramant, and to his wretched state
Fair comfort gave, and, as a courteous prince,
His person offer'd in his friend's defence ;
But will'd him ne'er from Egypt's faithless power
(A wandering exile) succours to implore. 900
Enough of old was Pompey warn'd (he said)
Unhappy Pompey to his death betray'd.
But since thou say'st Astolpho, with the bands
Of Ethiopia from Senapus' lands,
Has Afric seiz'd, and (sword and fire employ'd) 905
The capital of all thy realm destroy'd ;
And that Orlando, who with senseless mind
Late rov'd an outcast, him in arms has join'd ;

Metinks

Methinks the means I spy, which well pursu'd
From present ill may work thy future good. 910

For love of thee, and to maintain thy right;
Orlando will I call to single fight:

Full well I know with me he ne'er can stand,
His breast though adamant, though steel his hand.
He once remov'd, the Christian church I hold, 915
As to a hungry wolf the bleating fold.

Chaldeans, Persians, many names that own
My regal sway, the subjects to my throne;
Shall, at my nod, on Nubia's kingdom fall,
And soon from Afric every band recall. 920

Unhappy Agramant full gladly clos'd
With what Gradasso's friendship last propos'd,
And deem'd his thanks to favouring Heaven were due;
That to this desert isle the monarch drew:

But never could he yield (though fate once more 925
Would on such terms Biserta's walls restore)
That in his cause, to his eternal shame,
Gradasso, in his stead, should combat claim.

If in the list Orlando must be try'd—
Be mine the trial—(Agramant reply'd) 930
Prepar'd I stand—and as by Heaven decreed,
Let death or victory the fight succeed.

Be still the combat mine (Gradaffo cries)
 And what I wish a sudden thought supplies :
 Let thou and I together wage the fight 935
 Against Orlando and some other knight.
 Exclude not me, I little shall complain
 If last or first—(thus Agramant again)
 How through the world such glory can I share,
 Or find, like thine, a partnership in war? 940
 Sobrino then—Must I remain behind?
 Old as I seem, yet know with age declin'd
 Experience dwells, and counsel oft avails
 In danger most, where nerve or courage fails.

Strong was Sobrino, and robust in years, 945
 For deeds of valour fam'd above his peers :
 Through all his veins the vigorous spirits flow'd,
 As prime of youth still warm'd his generous blood :
 Just seem'd his suit—and for the destin'd way
 A messenger was nam'd, on whom to lay 950
 Th' important charge for Afric to repair,
 And to Orlando's ear the challenge bear ;
 And urge the knight, with two brave warriors more,
 In arms to meet the three, where round the shore
 Of Lipadusa's isle the billows roar. 955

The messenger, as such commission needs,
 With oars and sails to reach Biserta speeds ;

There

There finds Orlando, who o'er all presides,
 And 'midst his friends the spoils of war divides.
 And now in public was the fight declar'd, 960
 To which the Pagan king the Christians dar'd:
 Such joy Anglante's noble lord confess'd,
 With honour'd gifts the herald he caress'd,
 And fair dismiss'd—late from his friends he knew
 That bold Gradasso Durindana drew. 965
 Hence, through desire his weapon to regain,
 He purpos'd once to cross the Indian main;
 To where he deem'd the Pagan king to find,
 Whom fame declar'd by lands and seas disjoin'd
 From distant France: but now in happy hour 970
 He hopes that Fortune might his sword restore;
 And Brigliadoro, from his lord detain'd,
 Which in the field Troyano's offspring * rein'd.

Orlando now to engage the triple foes
 His faithful Brandimart and kinsman † chose: 975
 Both well approv'd in arms, that knew not fear,
 And oft approv'd, each warrior held him dear.
 For him and for his friends fair steeds he sought,
 With armour, spears, and swords of temper wrought.

* AGRAMANT.

† OLIVERO.

Few arms and weapons now could Afric boast, 980 }
The best king Agramant for Gallia's coast }
Exhausted to supply his numerous host. }
Orlando bids from every part produce
Such arms as best might serve their present use ;
And with his partners oft debates, to weigh 985
The hopes and issue of that glorious day.

END OF THE NINETEENTH BOOK.

THE
TWENTIETH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

THE ARGUMENT.

ROGERO, after the truce was broken, having debated some time, resolves to follow the fortunes of Agramant to Africa. Arriving at Marseilles, he engages in combat with Dudon, to release seven kings, whom that warrior had brought prisoners from the fleet of Agramant. The seven kings are set at liberty. Rogero embarks with them for Africa, and is overtaken by a dreadful storm, in which all perish but himself. He escapes by swimming to a small island, where he is entertained by a hermit, and receives baptism. Preparations of Orlando, Brandimart, and Olivéro, the three champions on the Christian side, against Agramant, Gradasso, and Sobrino: they depart for the island of Lipadusa. Grief of Flordelis. Conversation of Brandimart with Agramant, the night before the battle. Particulars of the battle.

THE
TWENTIETH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

WHILE thus in Afric's realm the Christian
powers

With conquering arms had raz'd Biserta's towers,
And Agramant, a wretched wanderer, view'd
His remnant force by land and sea subdu'd,
Say, Muse, what chanc'd to Clarmont's noble knight, 5
And brave Rogero, who beheld their fight
Disturb'd, by every tie of honour spurn'd,
And sacred truce to impious discord turn'd.

A faithful servant of Rogero, nurs'd
In camps and courts, and steady to his trust, 10
Who, while the conflict rag'd 'twixt either host,
Had ne'er, by fight, his dearest master lost,
Approach'd, and sudden to his hand convey'd
His sword and steed, to give the Pagans aid :

Rogero

Rogero grasp'd the sword, his feat regain'd, 15
But heedful from forbidden fields refrain'd.
He parted thence; yet ere he went, once more
Renew'd the oath he to Rinaldo swore:
If Agramant were first the truce to break,
Him and his sect for ever to forsake. 20
Of all he ask'd, and learn'd alike from each,
That first from Agramant began the breach.
Now held Rogero with himself debate
To abide in France, or share his monarch's fate;
When love, that held him with a powerful rein, 25
From Afric's land would still his steps detain;
And dread of shame, his other thoughts control'd,
And bade him faith with good Rinaldo hold.
No less reflection rankled in his breast,
That thus to quit king Agramant distress, 30
Must argue fear—though just to some might seem
The cause, yet others might his stay condemn;
And urge the license such an oath to break,
At first unlawful, and unjust to take.
That day and all the live-long night he mus'd, 35
And all th' ensuing day in doubts confus'd:
At length he fix'd to bid awhile adieu
To Gallia's realm, his sovereign to pursue.

Full well his foul love's potent rule obey'd,
 But more his loyalty and honour sway'd. 40
 He turn'd to Arli, hoping there to find
 Some Turkish bark to speed his course design'd.
 At sea, or anchor, not a bark he found,
 Nor Pagans saw, but lifeless on the ground ;
 For Agramant, what ships his need requir'd 45
 Departing took, the rest in port he fir'd.

His aim deceiv'd; to reach the neighbouring strand
 Of fair Marseilles, Rogero pass'd by land,
 In hope some vessel there might waft him o'er,
 To seek his lord on Afric's distant shore. 50
 The Dane * who late at sea so bravely fought
 The Moorish fleet, his prisoners hither brought.
 Scarce could a grain be cast amidst the flood,
 So thick around th' innumerable navy rode :
 So close each bulky ship to ship was join'd, 55
 Each ship with victors and with captives lin'd.
 The Pagan vessels, snatch'd that fatal night
 From fire and wreck (save some that scap'd in flight)
 By Dudon taken, now Marseilles had gain'd :
 With these, seven kings, who once in Afric reign'd ; 60
 Who when they saw their kingdoms' overthrow,
 With their seven ships submitted to the foe.

* DUDON.

That day brave Dudon left his deck to meet
His sovereign Charles, and landing from the fleet
His spoils and captives, rang'd in long array 65
The solemn triumph through the public way.
Abash'd and mute th' unhappy prisoners stand;
Around exult the conquering Nubian band;
While caught from man to man, with loud acclaim
The neighbouring cliffs resound with Dudon's name.

This fleet, for Agramant's, the warlike youth 71
At first believ'd, and eager for the truth
His courser spurr'd; but as he nearer drew,
Too soon his eyes the mournful captives knew.
The king of Nafamana there he view'd; 75
There Bambirago, Agricaltes stood;
There Ferraurantes, Rimedon renown'd;
Balastro, Manilardo there he found,
All these, with looks declin'd deep anguish show'd,
While down each cheek the manly sorrows flow'd. 80

Rogero saw, nor saw with breast unmov'd,
The doleful state of those whom dear he lov'd;
But well he knew entreaty here would fail,
And aid, enforc'd by arms, alone prevail.
Against their guards his furious spear he drove, 85
Nor fail'd his spear its wonted force to prove.

His

His falchion next he drew, and round him slain
A hundred fell, and bit th' ensanguin'd plait.
Dudon the tumult hears, beholds the blows
Rogero gives, nor yet the warrior knows : 90
He sees his men, who turn their feet to fly,
With many a groan, with many a fearful cry.
In corslet, mail, and cuishes arm'd he stands,
And swift his courser, shield, and helm demands.
Lightly he mounts his feat, receives his lance, 95
And shines confest a Paladin of France.
He bids the troops on either hand recede,
And gores with iron heel his foamy steed.
When now Rogero holy Dudon view'd,
As round on foot th' ignoble vulgar stood, 100
He deem'd him leader of the powers, and flew
To give the warrior-chief a warrior's due.
Him Dudon met, but when he view'd more near
Rogero's hand without his pointed spear,
His spear he cast aside, as one in fight 105
Who with advantage scorn'd to assail the knight.
Rogero, when the courteous act he spy'd—
Sure yonder warrior (to himself he cry'd)
Or much I err, is one of many nam'd
The Paladins, in fields of battle fam'd : 110

Fain would I, ere we join in combat, know
The name and lineage of my gallant foe.
He ask'd; and by his fair reply was known
Dudon the brave, the Dane Ugero's son.
To him good Dudon made the like request, 115
Rogero equal courtesy express'd.

Against each other now (their names declar'd)
They hurl'd defiance, and for deeds prepar'd.
That iron mace, which in a thousand fields
Had given him endless glory, Dudon wields: 120
With this full well his rightful claim he show'd
To Danish valour and Ugero's blood.

That sword, which helm and cuirass can divide,
Which scarce is equall'd through the world beside,
Rogero grasps, and while he grasps, displays 125
A virtue pair'd with noble Dudon's praise.

But good Rogero fear'd, o'er every fear,
To offend the virgin to his soul so dear.
Skill'd in each noble house of France, he knew
Dudon his birth from Armellina drew, 130

Sister to Beatrice, of whom was born
His Bradamant, whose gifts her sex adorn.
Hence ne'er with point direct the thrust he bends,
And seldom with its edge his blade descends:

Still.

Still on his guard, as falls the ponderous mace, 135

The stroke he parries, or he shifts his place.

Now whizzing round his rapid weapon flies,

And with such skill astonish'd Dudon plies,

That scarce with dazzled eyesight can he rein

His frightened courser, or his feat retain. 140

Yet still Rogero urg'd not half his force,

But check'd his valour in the middle course.

While Dudon saw that oft his valiant foe

With-held the fury of th' impending blow,

Unharm'd he fought—till now, with nerves unbrac'd,

His strokes grew faint, he felt his vigour waste; 146

At length compell'd the praise of arms to yield,

He still for generous soul maintain'd the field.

For Heaven's dear sake (he cry'd) Sir knight, incline

Thy thoughts to peace—the palm can ne'er be mine,

'Tis lost already—lo ! myself I own 151

Thy captive, by thy courtesy o'erthrown.

Rogero then—The peace thou seek'st to make,

Which here I give—on this condition take;

That those unhappy kings whom bonds confine, 155

Releas'd from thralldom thou to me resign.

He said; and pointed where in durance bound

The seven kings stood, with looks that fought the
ground;

And thus purfu'd—No longer these detain,
But free to Afric let them cross the main. 160
Thus he—The generous Paladin agreed,
Then to his hand the noble captives freed ;
And bade him choice from all his vessels make,
For Afric's coast his speedy course to take.

Rogero quits the port, he spreads the sail, 165
And gives the vessel to the treacherous gale ;
That first the canvas swells with friendly breeze :
With joy her merry course the pilot sees.
The land retreats—at length appears no more :
Surrounding ocean seems without a shore. 170
When, lo ! as rising eve obscures the day,
The wind reveals its purpose to betray :
It shifts, nor will a moment's pause allow,
By turns inyades the poop, the sides, and prow :
It whirls the ship, in giddy motion tost, 175
And all the troubled seaman's art is lost !
Now at his side he feels the mastering wind,
And now it howls before, and now behind :
Now dash'd aloft, the spumy billows rave,
And Neptune's white herds lowe above the wave. 180
A thousand deaths the trembling wretches fear ;
As many deaths, as threatening waves, appear !

At head or stern, the wind's increasing force
 Now forward drives, and backwards now, their course:
 One blast against the reeling vessel sets; 185
 And every blast with wreck the seaman threatens;
 While he, who holds the rudder, shakes with dread;
 The lively colour from his cheek is fled.
 He beckons oft, and oft with fruitless cry
 Bids strike the sail, and let the main-sheet fly; 190
 He bids, unheard, and every signal fails;
 So dire a noise, so deep a night prevails!
 His voice is lost amidst th' united cries
 Of frightened sailors mingling in the skies
 With louder din; while, dash'd together, break 195
 The frothy waves, and horrid concert make.
 From prow to poop alike, nor far nor near,
 They view no signal, no command they hear:
 Through throwds and tackling round the bending mast
 With double fury raves the hissing blast: 200
 From flashing lightning livid gleams are sent,
 And peals of thunder shake the firmament.
 One grasps an oar, one to the steerage flies;
 And each, with straining nerve, his office plies.
 One toils to loose, one faster makes: one laves 205
 The waters forth, and waves returns to waves.

Again his force resistless Boreas pours,
Again with rage the storm redoubled roars :
Against the mast the sail and sail-yard bend :
The oars break short—the seas to heaven ascend : 210
The prow is turn'd, and to the hostile tide
The vessel lays her unprovided side :
All now to Heaven their fleeting souls commend,
Expecting when the vessel would descend
Engulph'd—one mischief to another leads, 215
And lo ! a second soon the first succeeds.
Th' o'er-labour'd bark, with many a gaping seam,
Admits the influx of the hostile stream.
The tempest rages still—now lifted high
On mounting seas, they seem to touch the sky : 220
Now from the ridgy waves they sink so low,
They seem to view th' infernal realms of woe.
No hope remains ! Death glares in every sight !
Thus pass'd in horror all the sleepless night.
Nor with the dawn of day the tempest ceas'd ; 225
With dawn of day the tempest's force increas'd.
Before their eyes, above the angry tide,
Appears a rock, and not a hand can guide
The vessel's course the threaten'd death to shun,
On which, impell'd by winds and waves, they run. 230
And

And thrice, and four times, the pale pilot strove,
With every nerve, the rudder swift to move,
And clear the rock—but, lo! his purpose crost,
The rudder broke, and in the deep was lost!

No time is left for counsel or debate, 235

All help too distant, and too near their fate!

Their wreck deem'd certain—each the public cares
Forgets, and to preserve his life prepares.

Who first can reach her, gains the 'skiff with speed:

But soon such numbers enter as exceed 240

Her scanty bulk, and scarce her sides exclude

The rising billows that around intrude.

Rogero saw, how from the deck, in haste,

The master, captain, and the seamen pass'd:

Then as he stood, without his arms, undrest, 245

To seek his safety to the boat he press'd:

But entering there, he found such heaps were stow'd,

Still others following, till the greedy flood

Pour'd o'er the sides, and in one hour of fate

Down sunk the boat with all her wretched freight; 250

Down sunk the boat; and to the depths below

At once the vessel with the many go,

That late forsook the ship—loud shrieks arise!

Each sinking wretch to Heaven for mercy cries.

But soon, alas ! the vocal accent fails, 255

With such a rage th' un pitying furge prevails,

And chokes the sounds, that, struggling in their way,

Weak and more weak in dying plaints decay.

Some, when they sink, the sea for ever hides,

Some rise again, and float upon the tides. 260

Rogero fearless, while the tempest raves,

Borne from the bottom rises o'er the waves ;

And near him sees the rock above the main,

So late the terror of the sailor-train :

He strains each nerve, and, swimming, hopes to find

The cliff his refuge from the seas and wind. 266

He pants—breathes short—while from his face he
blows

Th' intruding brine, that in his nostrils flows.

Meanwhile the ship before the tempest flew,

The ship abandon'd by her wretched crew, 270

Who (as their cruel fortune will'd) to shun

The death they fear'd, on death more certain run.

O fickle state of man ! whose erring mind

Sees but the present, to the future blind !

The ship, so near destruction, safely rode, 275

Without her crew, or pilot, through the flood ;

As if the wind, that from the vessel view'd

The men retir'd, no more his rage pursu'd ;

Safe

Safe from the rock she stemm'd the billows' force,
And, free from shelves, securely plough'd her course.

The youth his dreadful way, through roaring tides 281
And raging foam, with sinewy arm divides :

He feels the breaking surge and howling wind,
But most he feels the tempest in his mind :

Remembrance now revives each promise given 285

To her he lov'd; and what he vow'd to Heaven,

When with Rinaldo late in fight he met,

And how his soul could every tie forget.

Repentant now, with many a fervent prayer

He begs of God his forfeit life to spare, 290

And vows, if e'er his feet shall tread the shore,

With heart sincere to embrace the Christian lore,

And ne'er again, in aid of Afric's band,

With sword or lance against the Faithful stand ;

But back to France resume his speedy way, 295

And there to Charles his due allegiance pay ;

Nor longer Bradamant with words delude,

But with true faith their happy loves conclude.

Scarce had he vow'd, when, lo ! he seems to swim
With nerves new-brac'd in every buoyant limb: 300

Wave rolling after wave alternate swells,

One lifts him high, and one his course impels.

Sinking and rising thus, the brine he cleaves ;
At length the rock his weary limbs receives,
And where with favouring shelf declines the steep, 305
All drench'd with ooze he issues from the deep.

Rough from the tossing surge, at Heaven's commands,
Upon the dreary cliff Rogero stands:

Around the savage shore he rolls his eyes ;
And, safe from sea, new fears by land arise ; 310

There doom'd, perhaps, on that dire coast to lie
A lonely exile, and with famine die.

But yet, resolv'd with constant mind to bear
What evil Heaven had doom'd his wretched share,
Up the steep rock his patient step he bends, 315
And now, by slow degrees, the height ascends ;

When sudden to his wondering sight appears
A fire, low bent with abstinence and years ;
A hermit, by his looks and gesture seen,
Of saint-like manners, and of reverend mien. 320

O Saul ! O Saul ! (he cry'd, as near he drew)

Why wilt thou thus my holy faith pursue ?

(As once to Paul our heavenly Saviour spoke,
What time he gave the dread, but saving stroke)

Think'st thou, unpaid, to pass th' opposing ford, 325
Defrauding of his dues the rightful lord ?

Lo ! God, who reaches all, whom late in thought
You deem'd remote, has here his judgment wrought.

Thus far the hermit, to whose holy sight
High Heaven in vision, the preceding night, 330
Great things disclos'd ; how, by his powerful hand,
Roger o safe should tread that desert land ;
Reveal'd his life, his every action past,
His future praise, and hapless death at last ;
With all the glory that henceforth should grace 335
His sons, his grandsons, and his numerous race.

The hermit then pursues ; and first, severe,
He pours reproof in young Roger o's ear ;
And, when remorse and shame his bosom move,
He soothes him with the balm of peace and love. 340
The youth he blames, who such delay could make
A yoke so pleasing on his neck to take :
Hence, what at first behov'd him to embrace,
When CHRIST so gently warn'd him oft to grace,
In peaceful times, he now receiv'd, as aw'd 345
Before the presence of an angry God,
And, deaf to mild reproof, confess'd his chastening
rod.

He comforts then, and tells him CHRIST will hear
Repentant sinners with indulgent ear ;

That, in the gospel vineyard of the Lord, 350
Each holy labourer finds a like reward.

In converse thus, with steps sedate and slow,
Together to the hermit's cell they go,
Cut in the living rock ; and o'er it stands
A hallow'd chapel that the east commands, 355
Fair, neatly built—and reaching to the flood,
Of various growth below, a quivering wood,
Where laurel, juniper, and myrtle green,
With spreading palm-trees, grace the lovely scene;
Whose mingled shade a liquid fountain feeds, 360
That down the rock its murmuring current leads,
Near forty years had past since first the fire
Forsook each worldly pleasure, to retire
To this recess, where, by his Saviour blest,
He led his days in purity and rest. 365
For wholesome food the gather'd fruits he took ;
To quench his thirst he sipp'd the crystal brook ;
And strong in health, and free from care and strife,
He reach'd th' extremest verge of human life.

Now in his cell the kindled fire he blew, 370
Then on the board his homely fruits he threw.
Rogero dry'd his vest and oozing hair,
Then fate and feasted on the simple fare ;

Where,

Where, by his faint-like host explain'd, he heard
Mysterious truths in Christian faith rever'd; 375
And from his hand, with day's returning light,
In the pure stream receiv'd the cleansing rite.

Awhile sequester'd in this calm abode
Rogero sojourn'd with the man of God;
Where oft in talk the useful hours were given 380
To various themes : now on the realms of heaven
The sage discours'd ; now on his worldly good ;
And now the race to issue from his blood. .

Meanwhile Orlando's eyes intent beheld
The distant sea with raging billows swell'd, 385
And view'd a ship that with expanded sail
To Afric sped before the driving gale ;
The ship whence, sunk beneath the roaring wave,
All, save Rogero, found a watery grave.
Without a seaman, passenger, or guide, 390
As fortune drove, or winds their breath supply'd,
With canvas stretch'd the vessel nearer bore
Her rapid way, and reach'd at length the shore
Where with his peers Orlando chanc'd to walk,
And cheer'd the friendly hours with social talk. 395
Desirous now to learn the vessel's state,
What chiefs she brought, or what her secret freight,
He

He trod the deck and every part explor'd;
 No chiefs, nor mariners he found on board,
 But view'd alone Rogero's arms and sword. 400
 To quit the ship such speed Rogero made,
 No time allow'd to save his trusty blade:
 This weapon by the Paladin was known,
 This, Balifarda nam'd, was once his own.
 His valorous arm this glorious weapon gain'd, 405
 Which base Brunello then by stealth obtain'd,
 And, as at Mount Carena's foot he stood,
 On young Rogero he the gift bestow'd.
 Full well the gallant sword Orlando knew,
 The steel how temper'd, and its edge how true, 410
 By proof he knew—and hence, to gladness rais'd,
 The sovereign Ruler of the skies he prais'd:
 He deem'd that Heaven (thus oft the warrior said)
 At such a time, had sent this sword in aid:
 At such a time, that call'd for all his might 415
 To meet in combat Sericana's knight,
 Who, join'd to force o'er all the world confess'd,
 Wore Durindana, and Bayardo press'd.
 Rogero's armour scarce attention drew,
 As little prizing what he little knew, 420
 Which seem'd, whate'er its worth, such worth to owe
 To temper less than pomp of outward show.

He

He wants no mail of proof, whose skin was made
Impervious to the javelin, dart, or blade.

To Olivero then he left the arms, 425

But kept himself the sword of temper'd charms.

To Brandimart he gave the steed, and shar'd

With either noble friend, in due regard,

The good that seem'd by Providence prepar'd. }

Each warrior for the day of battle fought 430

Some new device and vestment richly wrought.

Orlando, pictur'd in his scutcheon, took

Proud Babel's lofty tower with lightning struck.

A hound of silver Olivero bore,

The leash upon his back he couchant wore ; 435

The motto—TILL HE COMES—his mantle fram'd

Of gold, well worthy of a knight so fam'd.

But noble Brandimart resolv'd to take,

For his own honour and his father's sake,

A mantle fashion'd for the day of fight, 440

All fabled o'er with the dun hue of night,

The work of Flordelis ; who round it plac'd

A costly fringe with sparkling jewels grac'd.

With her own hand the dame had wrought the weed,

That cover'd all the warrior's arms and steed. 445

But from that hour the task was first begun,

To that which saw her love's dear labour done,

A constant

A constant weight hung heavy at her heart,
And much she fear'd to lose her Brandimart.
Oft had she known him in the field expos'd 450
To hostile rage, with perils round enclos'd ;
But such a terror ne'er her soul oppress'd,
Froze in her blood, or throbb'd within her breast;
And from this dread, which ne'er before she knew,
The gentle dame more fatal omens drew. 455

With arms, and every need prepar'd at hand,
Their sails the warriors to the breeze expand ;
But Sanfonetto and Astolpho stay,
Whose joint command the numerous hosts obey.

Unhappy Flordelis, in deep despair, 460
Laments and weeps, and wearies Heaven with prayer ;
And, far as sight the lessening object views,
With straining eyes the flying ship pursues,
Her Sanfonetto and Astolpho bore,
All pale and struggling, from the fatal shore ; 465
Then to her home the widow'd mourner led,
And left her spent and fainting on her bed.

Now favouring winds convey'd the gallant three,
The fearless champions, through the foamy sea ;
Swift to the isle the vessel urg'd her speed, 470
The list for such a glorious fight decreed.

And

And soon Anglante's knight th' expected land,
With Brandimart and Olivero, gain'd :
Arriving first, he first the ground possess'd,
And to the east his fair pavilion dress'd. 475

That day came Agramant, in martial pride,
And pitch'd his tent upon the western side.
But since the sun roll'd down departing light,
Till next Aurora, they deferr'd the fight.
Till morning dawn on either hand prepar'd, 480
The menials stood in arms their lords to guard.

The noble Brandimart at evening went,
(His chief permitting) to the Pagan's tent ;
With Afric's king to unlock his secret breast,
For once their souls the ties of friend confess'd, 485
When Brandimart in Afric's banner'd host
Had follow'd Agramant to Gallia's coast.
Mindful of former love the warriors meet,
And grasping hand in hand, each other greet.
With earnest reasons then the Christian knight 490
Would urge the Pagan to decline the fight,
With offers, from Orlando, to restore
Each city to his rule, from Nilus' shore
To where Alcides fix'd his pillar'd base,
Would he the faith of Mary's Son embrace. 495

Thee


Thee have I lov'd (he cry'd) thee, whilst I live,
 Shall ever love, and hence this counsel give.
 Well may'st thou know I deem that counsel good,
 Which I, O monarch! for myself purfu'd.
 CHRIST is our God, but Mahomet untrue—— 500
 By me the path of life and mercy view.
 The path I tread——and fain would thee, O king!
 With every friend, to life and mercy bring.
 In this consists thy weal—nought else aright
 Can work thy good, and least of all, the fight 505
 With Milo's son*, where conquest cannot weigh
 Against the evil, should'st thou lose the day.
 If thou should'st win—how little gain ensues!
 But if thou lovest—greatly must thou lose.
 Say, by thy hand Orlando breathless lie, 510
 Or we, who come with him to win or die,
 I see not how henceforth thou shalt regain
 Thy honour, and restore thy lost domain.
 Think not—should we be slain—the Christian state,
 So twin'd with us, so buried in our fate, 515
 That Charles can want, to earth's remotest end,
 Soldiers and chiefs his conquests to defend.

Thus Brandimart; and thus had further prest
 The wholesome counsels of a zealous breast,

* ORLANDO.

But

But with an angry voice and haughty look, 520
Impatient on his speech the Pagan broke.

Sure more than madness must possess thy mind,
And all who dare, like thee in folly blind,
Whate'er the chance, in evil or in good, 
Unask'd on others their advice obtrude. 525

That these thy words but speak thy former will
To seek my peace, and that thou seek'st it still,
I scarce can think, when, to my present harms,
I see thee with Orlando rang'd in arms.

Say rather, conscious of th' avenging day, 530

When that dire fiend shall make thy soul his prey,
Thou seek'st to drag with thee to lowest hell
All human kind, in endless pains to dwell.

Whether I lose or conquer—whether gain
My ancient realm, or exil'd still remain, 535

Heaven in its awful purpose must dispose;
Nor thou, nor I, nor yet Orlando knows.

Howe'er it fall—no fortune shall debase
My soul to actions that a king disgrace.

Hence to thy friends return! and if thy might 540

Can prove no better in to-morrow's fight,
Than now thy skill in eloquence is shown,
Orlando little shall thy succour own.

Thus

Thus Agramant his speech in anger clos'd ;
And both, retiring, till the morn repos'd. 545

With silver dawn of light, each warrior, drest
In shining arms, his foaming courser press'd,
That proudly paw'd and neigh'd, while wide around,
The seas, the shores re-echo'd to the sound.
When now the combatants together drew, 550
And to the skies their shiver'd lances flew
With horrid crash—th' affrighted waves appear'd
To swell and foam—the noise to France was heard !

By chance Orlando and Gradasso met,
And equal seem'd against each other set, 555
Save that Bayardo's vigour in the course
Gave seeming 'vantage to Gradasso's force.
Against the steed, with such resistless power
He rush'd, the steed which fierce Orlando bore,
That, forc'd before the dreadful shock to yield, 560
He fell, and measur'd with his length the field.
Orlando tries, but vainly still he tries,
With hand and spur to make his courser rise ;
When nought avail'd, the saddle he forsook,
Embrac'd his shield, and Balifardo shook. 565
On Afric's monarch Olivero ran,
And both with equal chance the tilt began.

But Brandimart has king Sobrino thrown
 From off his steed; though scarcely could be known
 If by his own or courser's blame he fell; 570
 For seldom fame Sobrino's fall could tell.
 But whether by his own or courser's fault;
 Unhors'd Sobrino lay the first assault.

Now Brandimart, who king Sobrino view'd
 Low-stretch'd on earth, no more with him pursu'd 575
 The fight, but turn'd Gradasso's arms to meet;
 By whom alike Orlando lost his feat.

The marquis now and Agramant, engag'd
 With equal chance, the doubtful combat wag'd:
 Against the shield their spears they broke, and drew
 Their flaming swords, the battle to renew. 581

Orlando on Sobrino cast his sight;
 Like him on foot, and idle from the fight:
 Fierce on the sage he rush'd, with dreadful look,
 And, as he trod, the skies with terror shook. 585
 Sobrino, who the dread encounter view'd,
 Firm in his arms with force collected stood.
 Then, as a pilot, who beholds from far
 The roaring onset of the watry war;
 Directs his prow against the billowy tide 590
 In mountains rising—thus Sobrino try'd,

With lifted shield, that ruin to repel,
Which from the sword of Falerina fell.

Full on the buckler's orb, with swift descent
Through double folds of plated steel it went, 595
Cleft all the shield, and in his shoulder made
A ghastly wound, where mail and plate o'erlaid, }
Oppos'd in vain the fierce descending blade.

Now, in his turn, Sobrino aims the blow
To wound Orlando; but his fearless foe 600
Unwounded stands—to him such favour Heaven,
And stars propitious, from his birth had given.

Again the noble earl the falchion sped,
And from Sobrino thought to part his head.
Sobrino, who the strength of Clarmont knows, 605
And finds no buckler can such strokes oppose,
Drew sudden back, yet scarcely could evade
The furious aim from Falerina's blade :

The sword fell flat, but o'er his forehead broke
The unfaithful helm, and stunn'd him with the stroke.
Stretch'd on the ground all pale Sobrino lay, 611
Nor soon recover'd to dispute the day.

Brave Brandimart, that on Frontino rode,
(The generous beast Rogero late bestrode)
So ply'd his weapons in the dangerous field, 615
He little seem'd in strength or skill to yield :

Had like defence secur'd his breast from harms,
 His force might more than meet Gradasso's arms.
 But, conscious of his weaker mail, now there,
 Now here he turns, and oft eludes the war : 620

No courser better than Frontino knew
 The knight's command, or at a signal flew :
 Where Durindana fell, he seem'd to know
 Its aim, and shunn'd the long-descending blow.

But in a different part the conflict rag'd, 625
 By Agramant and Olivero wag'd :

Both seem'd alike the skill of arms to claim,
 Their valour equal, and their strength the same.

Orlando now (to earth Sobrino sent)
 His ready step against Gradasso bent, 630

In aid of Brandimart ; but, from his steed
 Dismounted, urg'd on foot his eager speed ;
 When casting round his eyes, he view'd at large
 Sobrino's courser lighten'd of his charge :

Him, as he cross'd his way, with active heat 635
 He seiz'd, and seizing press'd the welcome feat :

One hand was seen the ponderous sword to wield,
 And one the rich and splendid bridle held.

Gradasso saw, as near Orlando drew,
 By name defy'd him, and to combat flew, 640

And, leaving Brandimart, his weapon's point
 Furious he drove, where twisted mail and joint
 Enclos'd Orlando's neck; through all it held,
 But the tough skin unhurt the thrust repell'd.

At once Orlando Balifarda waves, 645

From whose keen edge no magic temper faves:

In vain the corset, helm, and shield oppose;

Through corset, helm, and shield the weapon goes:

At once his bosom, face, and thigh receive

The smarting wound, he scarcely can believe; 650

For, since the day he first his armour wore,

No issuing blood e'er stain'd the mail before.

Wondering he views, and rages at the view,

This unknown sword his plates and cuirass hew

With that resistless force he deem'd alone 655

Bestow'd on Durindana, now his own:

More wary hence he fights, with more regard

Than wont erewhile, and less forgets to ward.

Thus stood the war—when now, long time depriv'd
 Of sense, Sobrino from his trance reviv'd: 660

He rose; but still his front its anguish own'd,

His shoulder still confess'd the grievous wound.

Across the plain his careful eyes he cast,

And heavy now to aid his sovereign pass'd.

As Olivero, all intent, purfu'd 665

The fight with Agramant, Sobrino stood

Behind unnoted of th' incautious foe,

And at his courser aim'd a speeding blow :

His hindmoſt leg receiv'd the biting ſteel :

He fell ; and with him Olivero fell, 670

While preſt beneath him on the rugged way,

His left-foot tangled in the ſtirrup lay.

Again, with ſtrength renew'd, Sobrino ſped

A ſidelong ſtroke, to lop the warrior's head ;

But this his arms forbade, his arms of yore 675

By Vulcan temper'd, and which Hector wore.

His danger Brandimart from far ſurvey'd,

And ſpurr'd his ſteed, and waving round his blade

Sobrino ſtruck, whoſe helm receiv'd the ſtroke,

While, headlong, juſtled by the courſer's ſhock, 680

He fell to earth—but ſoon the ſenior knight

His feet recovering, roſe again to fight,

On Olivero turn'd with fell intent ;

Once more to ſlay the knight his force he bent,

Or, as he fought to riſe, to fruſtrate his intent. 685 }

But Olivero, with his better hand

Still diſencumber'd, could his ſword command,

Which here he thruſt or whirl'd with matchleſs ſtrength,

And held Sobrino at the weapon's length.

He hop'd, ere long (the Pagan kept at bay) 690

To free his foot that now imprison'd lay.

Drench'd in his blood he sees th' invading foe,

And sees to earth the purple current flow ;

His trembling knees can scarce their weight sustain,

And vanquish'd soon, his limbs must press the plain.

Off Olivero strives in vain to rise, 696

Still on his foot the weighty courser lies.

Now Brandimart an iron tempest deals,

As round king Agramant Frontino wheels :

Now at his side, in front, and now behind, 700

Frontino circles rapid as the wind.

This steed the son of Monodant bestrides ;

Nor worse the steed the mid-day monarch * guides,

By Brigliadoro in the field sustain'd,

Rogero's gift, from Mandricardo gain'd, 705

Arms could he boast, of arms in battle try'd,

Whose temper oft the hostile steel defy'd ;

While Brandimart wore such as time could yield,

And sudden need had furnish'd for the field ;

Yet these he hop'd (escap'd from present harms) 710

To barter with his foe for stronger arms ;

* AGRAMANT.

His

His foe, whose shoulder wounded by his sword,
From the wide gash a stream of crimson pour'd.

Still in his side a wound the Christian felt,
With dreadful stroke by stern Gradasso dealt; 715
Yet with king Agramant so well he strove,
That oft through mail and fever'd plates he drove
The weapon's point; his fencing shield he cleft,
His better hand he raz'd, and pierc'd his left.

Such was their fight, yet all must sport be thought,
To deeds Orlando and Gradasso wrought. 721

Gradasso has Orlando half depriv'd
Of plate and mail, his helm afunder riv'd;
On either side has shorn his crest in twain,
And sent his shield divided to the plain. 725

But him the Paladin more sorely press'd,
And pierc'd with wounds his face, his throat, and breast:
To grief and madness fir'd, Gradasso view'd
In his own gore his smarting limbs embru'd; 729
While fierce Orlando fought, though near disarm'd,
Without a wound, from head to foot unharm'd.

Gradasso rear'd his falchion, at a blow
Through head and breast to cleave his hated foe.

He struck, but from his head the shining blade 734
Return'd unbath'd, though with the stroke dismay'd,
Before Orlando's fight the dazzling meteors play'd. }

He dropt the reins; his grasp had lost the sword,
But to his wrist a chain the hilt secur'd.

Scar'd with the thundering blow, the courser bore
The knight of Anglant round the sandy shore: 749

The knight all senseless, while he kept his seat,
Nor knew his flight, nor rul'd the curbing bit.

Gradasso, with Bayardo, swift pursu'd,
And soon had reach'd, but turning round he view'd
King Agramant to certain death expos'd, 745

With whom the son of Monodant had clos'd;
Whose left hand seiz'd his helmet, while the right

His beaver opening, at his dazzled sight

The dagger held, and no defence remain'd
For him, whose weapon Brandimart had gain'd. 750

Gradasso saw, and, furious at the view,

Orlando left, and to the rescue flew.

Now Brandimart (who deem'd that close engag'd

Gradasso with Anglante's warrior wag'd

The combat still) his art and force apply'd 755

His dagger in the Pagan's throat to hide,

When, lo! Gradasso struck with all his might,

Behind the helmet of the noble knight.

Father of Heaven! among th' elected blest,
Vouchsafe to give thy faithful martyr rest! 760

Who

Who now, the storm of life's short voyage o'er,
Has furl'd his sails upon a peaceful shore.

How could'st thou, Durindana, ruthless sword!

So wound Orlando, thy unhappy lord,

Before his eyes, without remorse, to end

765

His life's companion, and his truest friend?

The helm in vain oppos'd the fatal stroke,

Deep in the steel the edge resistless broke;

Through fold on fold a dreadful passage made,

And buried in his head the reeking blade.

770

All pale he fell, while from the gaping wound

A purple deluge flow'd, and drench'd the ground.

When now Orlando from his trance awoke,

As round the field he cast an eager look,

Full soon his dearest Brandimart he view'd

775

Low stretch'd on earth and gasping in his blood;

He saw the Pagan near, whose gestures tell,

That by his hand the much-lov'd warrior fell.

As some Nomadian shepherd that has spy'd

A hissing serpent from his presence glide,

780

Whose venom'd tooth his little son had slain,

That harmless sported on the sandy plain;

With sudden ire he grasps his knotty oak:

So seem'd Orlando, so his weapon shook,

(That

(That fatal edge which never fails to wound) 785
 And first the wretched Agramant he found,
 Of sword difarm'd, with purple gore bedew'd,
 With helm unlac'd, and shield afunder hew'd,
 With frequent gaspes in the fight receiv'd,
 And scarce from Brandimart with life repriev'd : 790
 Like some poor bird, who just escap'd survives
 The falcon's gripe, and doubts if yet he lives.
 Orlando came, and full the stroke he sped,
 Where to the shoulder join'd the crested head :
 The helm and gorget loos'd ; the trenchant steel 795
 Cut through the neck, and like a poppy fell
 The spouting head, while on th' extended shore
 The Lybian ruler funk, to rise no more :
 To Stygian shade descends his groaning ghost,
 By Charon ferry'd to the burning coast. 800

When now Gradasso, on the field display'd,
 The headless trunk of Agramant survey'd,
 (What ne'er till then befel) a sudden dread
 Benumb'd his veins, his shifting colour fled ;
 Already conquer'd, no defence he made, 805
 When high advanc'd he saw the mortal blade.
 Orlando on the left the thrust impell'd
 Beneath the ribs, till through his belly held

The

The griding steel, and at the adverse side
Appear'd from hilt to point with crimson dy'd: 810
And well the force bespoke a warrior's hand,
The first in arms of every martial band,
That with a single wound resistless slew
The bravest champion of the Pagan crew.

But, little joyful at his glorious deed, 815
The Paladin, alighting from his steed,
To Brandimart advanc'd with troubled pace,
The mournful drops fast trickling down his face :
Arriv'd, the gasping warrior's head he view'd
All drown'd in blood, his casque asunder hew'd. 820
Not less the sylvan bark a tree defends,
When the sharp ax with sweepy sway descends.
With speed Orlando from the dying knight
His helm unlac'd, and saw a dreadful fight :
The sword had cleft between his manly brows; 825
Yet fleeting life a short reprieve allows,
Of Heaven's high mercy, ere he breath'd his last,
To ask forgiveness for his errors past ;
With accents mild to soothe Anglante's chief,
Whose tears and sighs declar'd his speechless grief. 830
Orlando ! when thou mak'st to God thy prayer,
Thy friend (he cry'd) in thy remembrance bear :

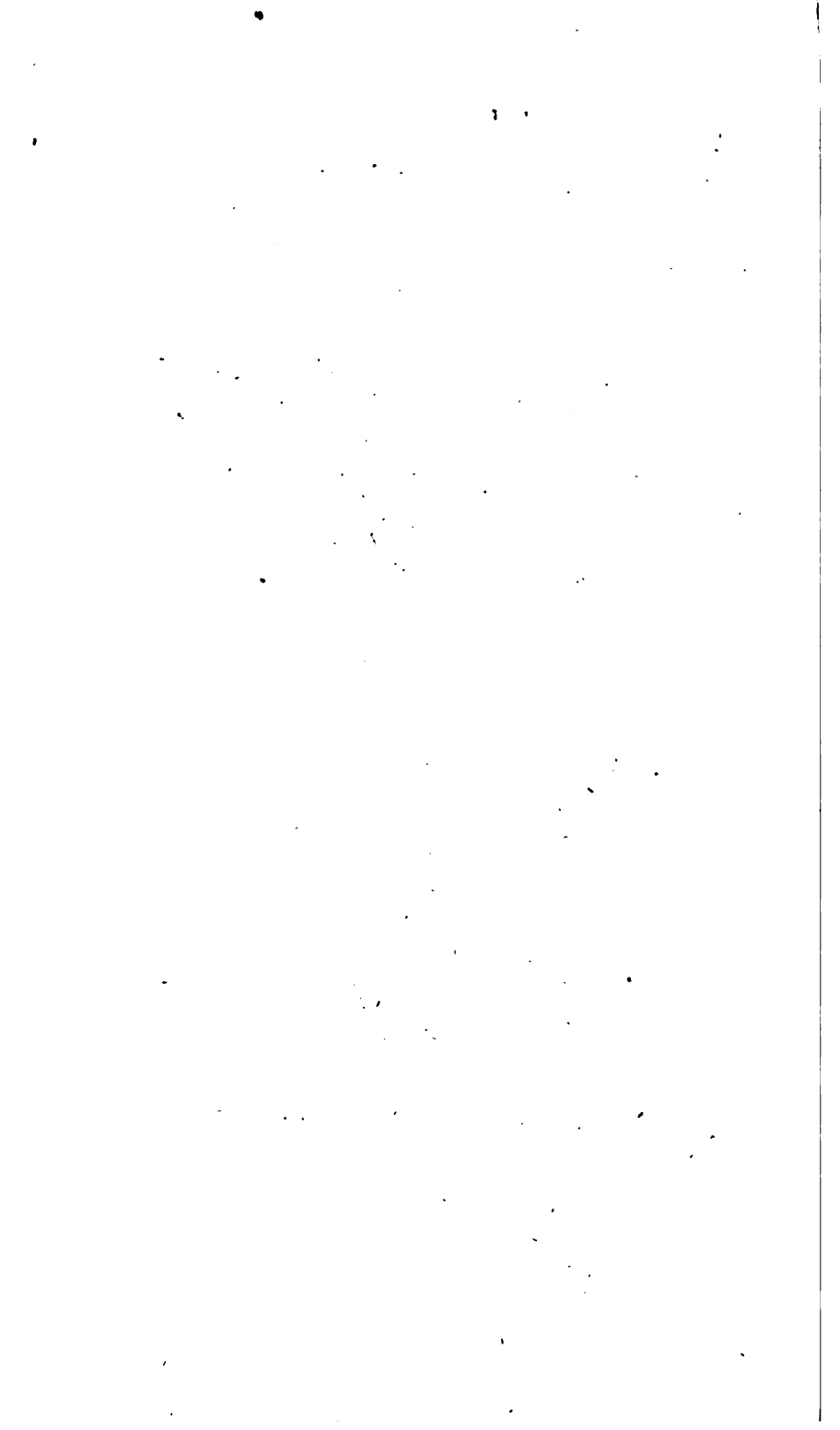
To

To thy dear trust I leave—he would have said
My Flordelis—but there his spirit fled :
His faltering accents half her name express'd, 835
But cruel death came on, and chok'd the rest.
The voice of angels then, in concert sweet,
Was heard in air, as from her mortal seat
The soul releas'd, in strains of hallow'd love,
Ascended swift to endless joys above, 840
Orlando, while his faith rejoic'd to view
Heaven's high reward an end so pure pursue ;
To know his Brandimart supremely blest,
And see Heaven opening to receive its guest ;
Yet such the frailty of the human heart, 845
Still nature shudders from a friend to part ;
One link'd so close, a brother scarce so dear,
Without the tribute of a tender tear.

Long on the ground Sobrino's limbs were spread,
And fast his veins their vital current shed : 850
Still Olivero lay in woeful state,
Nor yet has freed, nor from the galling weight
Can free his foot, which, crush'd with piercing pain,
His heavy courser press'd against the plain ;
And, but Orlando came his aid to lend, 855
(Orlando, weeping for his slaughter'd friend)

Himself

Himself had vainly from the floundering steed
Effay'd to move ; but when, at length, he freed
Th' imprison'd limb, he scarce could tread the ground,
While thrilling smart through every nerve he found,
As by surrounding friendly arms upheld 861
His feeble steps he dragg'd along the field.
Orlando on his conquest little thought,
A conquest deem'd, alas ! too dearly bought !
He mourn'd his Brandimart's untimely fate, 865
And much he fear'd his kinsman's dangerous state.
He found Sobrino from the dreadful strife
Surviving still ; but scarce of lengthen'd life
Affording hope, so much the purple tide
From many a wound his aged veins had dry'd. 870
Him, bath'd in blood, the generous victor gave
To skilful hands with healing arts to save,
And strives himself each wounded thought to calm
With gentle words of friendship's sovereign balm :
Such was this earl ! the fight's stern trial o'er, 875
Compassion sway'd, where fury sway'd before.



THE
TWENTY-FIRST BOOK
OF
O R L A N D O.

THE ARGUMENT.

BRADAMANT laments Rogero's breach of faith. **Rinaldo** consults his cousin **Malagigi** on the absence of **Angelica**: he hears of her leaving France with **Medoro**, and resolves to pursue her. His arrival in the forest of **Arden**, where he is attacked by the monster **Jealousy**. He is delivered by a knight; and afterwards, by drinking of the fountain of **Disdain**, is cured of his love for **Angelica**. He hears of the great battle between the six knights at **Lipadusa**, and arrives at the place just after the battle. The news of **Brandimart's** death brought to **Flordelis**: her lamentation. **Orlando's** speech over the dead body of his friend. Funeral procession of **Brandimart**. Death of **Flordelis**. **Orlando**, **Rinaldo**, **Olivero**, and **Sobrino** land on the hermit's island, where **Rogero** had been received after the tempest. **Olivero's** foot is cured. **Sobrino** is baptized, and his wounds are healed by the hermit. **Rogero** is made known to the other knights.

THE
 TWENTY-FIRST BOOK
 OF
 ORLANDO.

A GAIN deep sorrowing midst the Christian host,
 Sad Bradamant laments her lover lost;
 Again in fond complaints her anguish pours,
 Too oft companions of her lonely hours.
 She calls Rogero cruel to the trust
 Her love repos'd—she calls her fate unjust—
 Then gives a loose to grief—of Heaven complains,
 At once its goodness and its power arraigns;
 That Heaven which thus could breach of oaths survey,
 And not a sign of heavenly wrath display.
 Melissa she condemns, and him who gave
 Dark oracles from the mysterious cave;
 Whose lying prophecies her breast could move,
 And plunge her deeper in the sea of love.

Then to Marphisa oft her step she turns ; 15
To her full oft her brother's falsehood mourns :
To her she sighs, to her she vents her grief,
Hangs on her breast, and hopes from tears relief.
Round her lov'd friend her arms Marphisa throws,
And every comfort, words can yield, bestows ; 20
Tells her that ne'er Rogero will deceive
Her heart's dear hope, but all her fears relieve :
Or, should he not return, she vows to face
The man whose actions could his line disgrace ;
Force him with her to prove his sword in fight, 25
Or keep his faith, and do his mistress right.
These friendly words awhile consol'd the fair ;
For grief imparted oft alleviates care.

While thus on Bradamant affliction preys,
Learn if her brother happier leads his days, 30
Whose every nerve the fires of love infest,
Throb in his pulse, and kindle in his breast.
Since France at length had crush'd her numerous foes,
The other Paladins in peace repose :
Among the victors he alone remains 35
A wretched captive in a woman's chains.
His kinsman Malagigi now he fought,
On whom he oft repos'd each burthen'd thought :

To

To him, with reddening cheek and eye deprest,
 The knight reveal'd each secret of his breast; 40
 And begg'd him to disclose where distant rov'd
 The fair Angelica, his best-belov'd.

He said; when Malagigi's wonder grew
 At this unlook'd-for tale, since well he knew
 That oft himself had try'd with every art, 45
 Of prayers and threats to bend his stubborn heart.
 He bade him call to mind how oft his scorn
 Had made her proffer'd love an ill return;
 And how himself, in dreary dungeon laid,
 Had nearly fall'n, for vows so ill repaid, 50
 A guiltless victim to th' offended maid.

Rinaldo still pursues the dear request;
 And moves compassion in his kinsman's breast;
 Who for reply appoints some future day,
 And sends the champion full of hopes away. 55

Now Malagigi to the place retir'd,
 Where, when his schemes infernal aid requir'd,
 He calls the demons forth, where dark as night,
 And inaccessible to mortal sight,
 A grotto stands, enclos'd by hills that rise 60
 In craggy steep, and shoot into the skies.
 His book he opens, calls the fiends aloud,
 And round in haste the fiends obedient crowd:

Of these selecting one, best skill'd to show
 Each maze of love, from him he seeks to know 65
 What cause could soften thus Rinaldo's heart,
 That late, unpierc'd, repell'd each amorous dart.
 He learns what passions different streams inspire,
 How one creates, and one absorbs desire :
 Each wondrous fortune that the knight beset 70
 The demon told, and fail'd no less to tell
 How to the Moor Medoro's youthful arms
 Angelica resign'd her virgin charms ;
 Then how the maid Europa's climes forsook,
 And through th' unstable flood her voyage took, 75
 Her vessel launching from Hispania's land,
 With spreading sails for India's wealthy strand.

Now, at th' appointed hour, Rinaldo flies
 To learn his fate ; when Malagigi tries
 To avert his thoughts from one who could disgrace, 80
 With such a partner, her illustrious race,
 And for her realms forsake the Christian shore ;
 That nought avail'd his cares to seek her more,
 Who with Medoro plough'd the foamy sea,
 And now had measur'd more than half her way. 85

With mind prepar'd (accustom'd to her scorn)
 The fair's departure would the knight have borne :

He

He came resolv'd already for her sake
To climes remote his toilsome course to take;
But when he heard a Pagan youth possess'd 90
The first dear blessings of her maiden breast,
He sigh'd—he rav'd—his grief to frenzy rose;
This woe by far surpass'd his former woes:
He strove to speak, but speech his tongue forsook;
His pulse beat quick, his lips convulsive shook; 95
And stung with jealous pangs, the wretched knight
Abrupt withdrew from Malagigi's sight.

Soon as his first surprise and plaints were o'er,
He bent his thoughts to visit India's shore:
For this, from Pepin's son he leave obtain'd, 100
And urg'd the plea, that by Gradasso gain'd
In shameful wife, in stain of knightly race,
His steed Bayardo, to his great disgrace,
Was thither borne, where, to retrieve his fame
He hasten'd, lest the Pagan should proclaim, 105
With lying vaunts, he won by sword and lance
The courser from a Paladin of France.

Though loth to grant, the king could ill deny
A suit, where justice urg'd him to comply.
Dismiss'd by Charles, the knight his way pursu'd, 110
While France with sorrow his departure view'd:

Dudon and Guido would his perils share,

But he alone would every peril dare.

Paris he leaves, his soul with anguish burns,

And now he sighs, and now he weeps by turns. 115

Remembrance still his anxious soul employs,

When smiling Fortune proffer'd all the joys

That beauty gives, to bless his happy arms,

And when his folly spurn'd the proffer'd charms.

How did he then the precious moments waste ! 120

How willing would he now redeem the past !

With thoughts like these still rankling at his breast,

Rinaldo to the east his course address'd ;

To Basilea bound, the Rhine he pass'd,

And enter'd Arden's dreary shades at last. 125

As many a mile the Paladin pursu'd

His venturous way amidst the lonely wood,

From towns and cities far remote, expos'd

To perils strange, with deepening wilds enclos'd ;

A sudden darkness o'er the sky was spread, 130

Th' affrighted sun in clouds conceal'd his head,

And from a cavern, veil'd in darkest night,

A female monster rush'd, abhorr'd to fight !

Her thousand eyes a watch eternal keep,

No lids were seen to close their orbs in sleep : 135

As

As many ears her head terrific bears,
And hissing snakes supply the place of hairs:
A horrid serpent for her tail appears,
That o'er her breast in curling volumes rears.
From hell's dire gloom, where howling fiends lament,
This dreadful demon to the world was sent. 141
What ne'er till then had touch'd Rinaldo's breast
In many a field of death; he now confess'd.
Soon as the monster met his startled view,
And swift to assail him near and nearer drew, 145
A terror, more than mortal can sustain,
Congeal'd his blood, and crept through every vein;
Yet wanted courage in his looks he feign'd,
And drew his weapon with a trembling hand.
The cruel fiend, well practis'd in the field, 150
Began th' assault, and round the warrior wheel'd;
Her venom'd snake she brandish'd as she came,
And at Rinaldo bent her baleful aim:
She leaps upon him with a furious bound:
Now here, now there, Rinaldo shifts the ground: 155
He deals direct, and sidelong many a blow,
But none he deals can reach his hated foe.
The fiend applies her serpent to his breast:
Beneath his mail he feels the dreadful pest

Cold at his heart : now on his helm she rides ; 169

Now o'er his face, now round his neck she glides.

Rinaldo, terrify'd, his fiery steed

Gores with the spur, and urges all his speed :

The ruthless fiend, that follows like the wind,

Vaults with a bound, and grasps him close behind !

Whether direct or short his course he wheels, 166

Still at his back the direful plague he feels :

In vain each art to shake her thence he tries,

And with arm'd heel his rapid courser plies :

Like leaves in autumn shakes his freezing heart : 170

The cruel snake clings close to every part :

He groans—he howls—and shuddering with affright,

He calls aloud for death, and loaths the light,

Through bogs, through brakes, through thorny ways
and rude,

Through thickest covert of th' entangling wood, 175

He flew, in hopes to loosen from behind

Th' infernal fiend, whose snake his limbs entwin'd.

At length, with arms of shining steel array'd,

A knight appear'd, that brought him timely aid :

His crest a broken yoke, and in his shield 180

Red flames he bore upon a yellow field :

With flames his surcoat was embroider'd o'er ;

And such the trappings which his courser wore.

A falchion

A falchion grac'd his side, a spear his hand;
 His saddle-bow a burning mace sustain'd: 185
 A mace that, stor'd with fire eternal, sent
 Flash after flash, which never could be spent;
 Against whose power no buckler would avail,
 Nor toughest helm, nor strongest temper'd mail;
 But all gave way where'er the champion turn'd 190
 His dreadful arms, that unextinguish'd burn'd.

The stranger-knight, who heard Rinaldo's cries,
 His courser spurs, and to the rescue flies;
 And soon he views the fiend, whose snake enroll'd
 Rinaldo's limbs in many a winding fold: 195
 Who glow'd with feverish heat, or shook with
 freezing cold,

Swift came the knight, against her side he thrust
 His potent spear, and hurl'd her in the dust:
 She fell; but soon again the earth forsook,
 And, rear'd aloft, her venom'd serpent shook 200
 In spiral wreaths: no longer will the knight
 With javelin, but with fire pursue the fight:
 He grasps his mace, and where the serpent curls
 Her rattling scales, or where in length unfurls,
 With ceaseless aim directs the fiery blows 205
 Like crushing storms, nor rest nor pause allows.

While

While thus his weapon's unresisted sway
Or drives the monster back, or holds at bay,
He bids the Paladin the path pursue
That from the thickets to the mountain drew. 210

He said—The Paladin observant flies,
And backward fears to cast his loathing eyes;
Nor stays, till far beyond the monster's sight,
Though rough the path and arduous is the height.

Meanwhile the champion to her dismal cell 215

Has driven by force the ghastly child of hell;
There, while in fury for her frustrate will
She gnaws her flesh, her breast black poisons fill,
And from her thousand eyes eternal tears distill. }

The victor then impell'd his courser's speed 220
To join Rinaldo, and in safety lead
From those drear wilds; and on th' ascending height
O'ertook, and stood beside the gentle knight.

Rinaldo now with grateful words repaid
His service done—Accept my thanks (he said) 225

Though thanks are poor, when life can scarce repay
The glorious aid of this adventurous day.

Give me, at least, to learn thy name, and know

To whom, Sir knight, I such deliverance owe;

That Charles may hear, and all his peers around, 230

Thy matchless valour, and thy praise resound.

To

To whom the knight—My name yet unreveal'd,
Be not displeas'd if still I keep conceal'd :
This shalt thou learn, before the noontide shade
A foot has lengthen'd o'er the dewy glade. 235

In converse thus they journey'd, till they found
A crystal fount, that oft with murmuring found
Strangers and swains allur'd its draughts to prove,
And quaff a long oblivion of their love.
These are the cooling waters that assuage, 240
(O mighty prince !) the heat of amorous rage ;
From which Angelica her hatred drew,
From which Rinaldo's first aversion grew.

The knight, who with Rinaldo came and view'd
Where the clear stream the bordering plants bedew'd ;
As faint with heat and toil, his courser stay'd : 246
Here let us rest awhile—the stranger said.
Well may we here (Rinaldo cries) repose,
Now with fierce rays meridian Phœbus glows :
My limbs unnerv'd, so forely late oppress'd 250
By that dire fiend, would gladly welcome rest.

Thus they, when each alighting, gave his steed
To rove at large, and through the forest feed :
Each from his head the radiant helm unlac'd,
And on the turf, with flowers enamell'd, plac'd. 255

Rinaldo then, oppress'd with thirst and heat;
To the smooth mirror bent his eager feet;
At one cool draught its sovereign virtue prov'd;
And thirst, and heat, and love at once remov'd.

Soon as the knight unknown beheld him sip 260
The cooling stream, and raise his moisten'd lip,
And saw his heart estrang'd from Cupid's fire,
Repentant now of every fond desire,
Erect he rose, and with a lofty look
Himself disclos'd, and in these accents spoke : 265
Know then, Rinaldo, I am call'd DISDAIN,
And hither come to break thy galling chain.
He said; and instant vanish'd from the view,
And, with the knight, his phantom-steed withdrew.
Rinaldo, speechless, cast around his eyes : 270
Where is my champion fled? amaz'd he cries.—
All this th' effect of magic art he thought,
Some friendly spell by Malagigi wrought,
To break that yoke, which long, with galling pain,
His tyrant passion forc'd him to sustain. 275
Or, haply, God, in his eternal love,
Had, from his holy hierarchy above,
An angel sent, his saving grace to deal,
As once he sent him Tobit's eyes to heal.

Next day to Bafilea's town he came; 280
 Ere this he reach'd was thither spread the fame
 That earl' Orlando stood prepar'd for fight
 With Agrámant and Sericana's* knight.
 Fain would Rinaldo (though remov'd afar)
 The glorious combat with Orlando share: 285
 Full many a mile he tir'd full many a steed,
 And many a guide—impatience wing'd his speed:
 The Rhine he pass'd, and now his way pursu'd
 O'er Alpine steeps, now Italy he view'd;
 Now Mantua and Verona he forsook, 290
 And cross the Po his rapid journey took.
 Then, changing steeds, again his way pursu'd,
 And Rimeni, at close of evening, view'd;
 Nor would at Montefior till morning wait,
 But reach'd, with rising Sol, Urbino's gate. 295
 The Apennine he past; and now no more
 Beheld it on the right; then journey'd o'er
 The Ombrian and Etruscan realms; then view'd
 Imperial Rome; to Ostia then pursu'd
 His rapid way; and next by sea he gains 300
 An ancient town, where near, in hallow'd plains,
 Anchises' pious son interr'd his fire's remains. }

* GRADASSO.

His vessel here he chang'd, and to the shore
Of Lipadusa's isle his voyage bore ;
That isle the champions for their list design'd, 305
That isle, where late the six in battle join'd.
Rinaldo urg'd the jolly sailor train,
With oars and sails to cleave the briny main.
At speed they fly ; but adverse winds detain'd
His tardy vessel from the wish'd-for land. 310
He came, but came what time Anglante's knight
Had reap'd the laurels of the glorious fight ;
King Agramant and king Gradasso kill'd ;
Yet hard the conquest of the sanguine field ;
Great Monodantes' son was now no more ; 315
And pale in anguish on the sea-beat shore
Lay Olivero, feeble with his pain,
Whose foot no longer would his bulk sustain.
Nor here the noble earl could tears withhold,
When good Rinaldo he embrac'd, and told 320
The death of Brandimart, their friend belov'd,
In every chance of arms and friendship prov'd.
Not less Rinaldo, when the knight he view'd
With helmet cleft, his mournful cheeks bedew'd.
Then Olivero in his arms he press'd, 325
And with consoling words each chief address'd,
While

While much himself repin'd, that late he came;
Too late to share their dangers and their fame.

Now to the distant land the menial train
Of Agramant and stern Gradasso slain, 330
Each breathless corse with duteous care convey'd,
And in the ruins of Biserta laid.

The glorious conquest by Orlando won,
To Sanfonetto and Astolpho known,
Great joy in each infus'd, though damp'd to hear 335
The mournful end of one they held so dear:
The death of Brandimart each heart depress'd,
Each face the signs of deep-felt grief confess'd.
Ah! which of those who lov'd his friend so well,
To Flordelis the killing news shall tell? 340

As Flordelis at night in slumber lay,
The night preceding that unhappy day,
She dreamt the mantle which her pious care
Had fashion'd for her Brandimart to wear,
His ornament in fight, now, strange to view, 345
Was sprinkled o'er with drops of sanguine hue;
She thought her erring hand the vest had stain'd,
And thus in slumber to herself complain'd.

" Did not my lord command these hands to make
" His vests, his mantle, all of mournful black? 350
" Why

“ Why have I then, against his bidding, spread

“ The fable ground with fearful spots of red ?”

Ill omens hence she drew—Th’ ensuing night

Arriv’d the tidings of the glorious fight ;

Astolpho yet conceal’d, with tender fear, 355

A truth too dreadful for a wife to hear ;

Till now, with Sanfonetto join’d, he came

(A mournful pair) before the boding dame.

Soon as she view’d the face of either chief,

In such a conquest clouded o’er with grief, 360

No more was needful—her distracted thought

Too well divin’d the fatal news they brought :

Chill grew her heart, and sickening at the light,

Her closing eyes were cover’d o’er with night :

Senseless and pallid, stretch’d on earth she lay, 365

And look’d a wretched corse of lifeless clay.

Her sense returning, frantic with despair,

She call’d her much-lov’d lord—she rent her hair—

She bruis’d with cruel hands her groaning breast,

She rav’d as if some fiend her soul possess’d. 370

So seem’d the Menades, when wide were borne

Their shouts and clamours with the maddening horn.

From each, by turns, she begg’d some sword or dart,

Some weapon’s point to pierce her to the heart.

Now

Now would she seek the ship that to the shore 375

The corse of either Pagan monarch bore,

On their remains with momentary rage

To glut her vengeance and her grief assuage :

Now would she pass the seas, to view where died

Her better half, and perish by his side. 380

Why did I leave thee, O ! my Brandimart !

On such a day without me to depart !

I saw thee go—I fainted at the view—

Why did not Flordelis her lord pursue ?

Had I been present in the hour of fight, 385

My eyes had watch'd thee with a lover's sight ;

When fell Gradasso rais'd behind his blade,

My single cry had given thee saving aid.

My speed perhaps had rush'd between, and found

The happy time to take thy threaten'd wound ; 390

My head, for thine, had met the Pagan sword,

A worthless ransom for my bosom's lord !

Yet will I die—though now my parting breath

Avails not thee, nor profits aught my death.

But had I died for thee—what heavenly power 395

To better use could bless my dying hour ?

Had cruel fate, or Heaven averse, withstood

My pious aid to save thy dearer blood,

At least I had obtain'd the mournful bliss,
 To bathe with tears, to press with many a kiss, 400
 Thy ashy cheek ; and ere with sons of light
 Thy soul had to her Maker wing'd its flight,
 I might have said—To heavenly peace ascend !
 Thy flight ere long shall Flordelis attend !——
 Thus canst thou, Brandimart, thy consort leave ? 405
 And is it thus thy sceptre I receive ?
 With thee at Damogira thus I meet !
 And thus thou shar'st with me thy regal seat !
 How, ruthless Fortune ! hast thou clouded o'er
 My future prospects—hope is now no more ! 410
 Since I have lost this good, all comfort dies,
 And not another with the world supplies !

In words like these the fair afflicted mourns,
 And now again her frantic rage returns ;
 Again with cruel hand her cheeks she tears, 415
 Beats her white breast, and rends her scatter'd hairs.
 But leave the dame awhile in plaints and tears,
 And let us seek Orlando and his peers.

Orlando wishes, for his kinsman's * weal,
 To find some leech his dreadful hurt to heal ; 420
 And on his breathless Brandimart bestow
 Such honour'd rites as friends to friendship owe.

* OLIVERO.

The

The mountain now he fought *, whose flaming ray
 Dispels the night, whose smoke obscures the day :
 Propitious blew the wind, and to the right, 425
 Not distant far, the island rose in sight.

Soon as the sun declin'd to evening shade,
 The busy mariners their anchors weigh'd,
 While from her horns, to light their watery road,
 The silent goddess trembled on the flood. 430
 By dawn of day they trod the destin'd shore;
 And thence their course to Agrigento bore ;
 And here Orlando on th' ensuing night
 Bade all prepare to grace the funeral rite.

The pomp dispos'd, when now the sun had left 435
 The fading sky, and earth of light bereft,
 Amidst the peers, that, call'd by flying fame,
 From distant towns to Agrigento came ;
 Amidst bright torches kindling all the strand ;
 Amidst loud cries and groans on every hand ; 440
 Orlando to the breathless body turn'd
 Of him so lov'd in life, in death so mourn'd.
 Bardino there, with years and sorrow bow'd,
 Beside the sable bier lamented loud :
 His eyes, that in the ship had pour'd a tide 445
 Of briny tears, their fountains still supply'd.

* ÆTNA.

He rav'd at Heaven, his cruel stars deplor'd,
And, like a lion pin'd in sickness, roar'd :
With frantic, trembling, wither'd hands he tore
His wrinkled flesh, and rent his tresses hoar. 450

Soon as the crowds the earl approaching view'd,
Each with shrill sound his plaints and cries renew'd.
Orlando near the corse with sad survey
Awhile in silence gaz'd, as pale it lay,
Pale as Acanthus, or some fading flower 455
Untimely cropt at morn or evening hour ;
Deeply he sigh'd, and bending still a look,
Fix'd on his lifeless friend, at length he spoke.

O my brave friend ! companion of my love !
Who, dying here, surviv'st in bliss above ! 460
A happy life thou gain'st, no more to know
The toils and changes of our world below.
Forgive me now th' involuntary tear,
That mourns I still am doom'd to linger here :
I weep not thou art fled from earth's annoy, 465
But weep I cannot live with thee in joy.
Here am I left—thou taken from my sight,
What is there more to afford my soul delight ?
Distress and toil with thee inur'd to bear,
Why should I not thy peace and triumph share ? 470

Great is my guilt, still clos'd in mortal clay,
 Forbid to follow on thy glorious way.
 If I with thee could every loss sustain,
 Why am I not a partner in thy gain?
 Alone thou gain'st, and I alone have lost ; 475
 Thou blest in Heaven,—I here in trouble tost !
 France, Germany, and Italy shall know
 Thy death too surely, and partake my woe.
 How will my kinsman, royal Charles, lament !
 How will the Paladins their sorrows vent ? 480
 How will our church and empire rue the day
 That snatch'd, in thee, their best defence away !
 How shall thy death the Pagan world relieve !
 What strength and courage will the foes receive !
 What must thy consort feel ?—I see her eyes 485
 All drown'd in tears ! I hear her piercing cries !
 Me she accuses, and must ever hate
 To think through me her lord has met his fate—
 Yet, Flordelis ! one comfort shall remain
 Amidst the anguish which his friends sustain, 490
 That every knight, who risks for fame his breath,
 May envy Brandimart his glorious death.
 Not he in Rome's dire gulph absorb'd and lost,
 The Decii fam'd, or Codrus, Argos' boast,

Could nobler fall, and in their fall bestow 495
More than his country to thy lord shall owe.

Thus spoke Orlando o'er the warrior dead ;
And now the priests their long procession led,
Black, white, and grey ; while all the hallow'd train,
In order rang'd, pac'd slowly o'er the plain, 500
Imploring God, among the spirits blest,
To take the champion's soul to endless rest.
Innumerable torches pierc'd the veil of night,
And seem'd to emulate departed light.

The corse is rais'd ; and thence the weight to bear, 505
Peers, nobles, knights, the honour'd contest share :

A pall of purple o'er the bier was spread,
Where gold and jewels mingled splendor shed :
Nor less the couch and pillow shone, embost 509
With sparkling gems, and wrought with art and cost ;
Here stretch'd at length the lifeless knight was laid,
In purple vests, of richest work, array'd.

Three hundred first selected through the land,
Of humble order, led the solemn band,
All cloth'd alike in vestments long, that clung 515
Around their limbs, and to their ankles hung.

A hundred pages next, and each a steed
Of mighty size bestrode, and warlike breed ;

The

The steed and page alike in fable veil'd,
Along the ground their mourning vesture trail'd : 520
Before, behind, unnumber'd banners rais'd
With various ensigns and devices blaz'd
Around the herse—the trophies of his might
From conquer'd legions won in dangerous fight :
All gain'd to Cæsar's and to Peter's power 525
By force that, now extinct, shall gain no more.
Then many a shield from many a warrior torn,
With proud impresses by their masters worn.
Two hundred then pursu'd, in ranks ordain'd
To swell the pomp : each better hand sustain'd 530
A kindled torch, and, like the rest, conceal'd
In mournful black, nor mien nor face reveal'd.
Orlando follow'd next, with stifled sighs,
The tear big swelling in his manly eyes.
Rinaldo then no less of grief betray'd : 535
But Olivero by his foot was stay'd.
'Twere long each ceremonial to rehearse,
And paint the solemn obsequies in verse ;
What funeral gifts were made, what vestures fram'd
In various guise, what countless torches flam'd ! 540
Now to the hallow'd fane their steps they bent,
Nor left a cheek unmoisten'd as they went.

His goodness, valour, youth, and grace engage
The grief of either sex, and every age.
Amidst the fane each pious office done 545
Of unavailing tears and female moan ;
Soon as the holy priests, in heavenly strain,
Their prayers had chanted o'er the warrior slain,
Within a tomb, of polish'd stone compos'd,
On two fair pillars rais'd, the corse they clos'd : 550
O'er this, inwrought with gold, Orlando threw
A costly mantle of impurpled hue,
The dead to honour, till his love could raise
A structure worthier of the warrior's praise.

Orlando, ere he left Sicilia's isle, 555
Rare costly marbles for the sumptuous pile
From various parts procur'd with studious care ;
Rich porphyry and alabaster fair.
He form'd the plan, and every artist skill'd
Employ'd, with high rewards, the tomb to build. 560
And Flordelis, when to the isle she came,
Rich columns added to th' unfinish'd frame,
Which, when Orlando left Sicilia's shore,
The hapless dame prepar'd from Afric bore,
But when she found no tears her grief suffice, 565
Nor her sad soul reliev'd with endless sighs ;

Nor

Nor prayers, nor masses for the dead address,
Appease the anguish of her wounded breast ;
She there decreed her fix'd abode to make,
Till life's warm spirit should its hold forsake. 570

Then in the tomb she fram'd her dreary cell,
Alone, secluded from the world to dwell.
Full many a message to the mournful dame
Orlando sent ; himself in person came

To take her thence, and with provision fair 575
Had trusted her to * Galerana's care :

Or would she rather with her sire reside,
Himself to Lizza would the mourner guide ;
Or, at his cost, a cloister'd mansion raise,
To dedicate to Heaven her remnant days. 580

But in the sepulchre unmov'd she stay'd,
There night and day with holy fervour pray'd ;
Though few the hours that thus her life she led,
For soon the Parcæ shear'd her vital thread.

Already from that isle, where bards have told 585
The Cyclops once were wont their place to hold,
The three brave knights of France with heavy mind
Departing, mourn'd the fourth they left behind.
But ere the warriors would the land forsake,
They fought with them some skilful leech to take. 590

* Wife to CHARLEMAIN.

For Olivero's foot, which, fore aggriev'd,
No lenient rest, no healing salve reliev'd.
While deep he groan'd, oppress'd with shooting pain,
They pitying heard; and, while they stood in vain
In deep debate, a thought the pilot mov'd, 595
When thus he spoke, and each th' advice approv'd.
Not far remote (he said) a rock there stood,
On which a hermit made his lone abode,
With whom none ever, at his greatest need,
Had fail'd in aid or counsel to succeed. 600
Wonders he wrought that Heaven to man denies;
He made the blind to see, the dead to rise:
He, with the cross, could hush the winds asleep,
And still to calm the roarings of the deep;
And, would they seek the man to God so dear, 605
They soon might find, releas'd of every fear,
Good Olivero from his hurts reliev'd;
Since oft the Saint had greater deeds achiev'd.

Orlando heard, and bade, without delay,
Steer to the hallow'd feat their rapid way: 610
With course direct they cut the briny tide,
And at Aurora's dawn the rock descry'd:
The bark, directed by the skilful crew,
Now near the shelvy land securely drew;

There,

There, by the menial train and seamen's aid, 615
The groaning marquis in the skiff they laid,
And through the dashing brine of billows hoar
In safety landed on the craggy shore,
Where dwelt the sage, who to Rogero gave
The rite baptismal in the cleansing wave. 620

Heaven's holy servant, who in CHRIST believ'd,
With joy Orlando and his friends receiv'd ;
With looks complacent every knight he bless'd ;
And now enquir'd on what adventure prest,
They reach'd his cell ; though, by the saints foretaught,
He knew what cause the warriors thither brought. 626

Orlando told his purpose, to implore
Some healing aid his kinsman to restore ;
Whom, fighting for the faith, his friends with grief
Beheld in anguish hopeless of relief. 630

The hermit bade them every doubt remove,
And promis'd Olivero soon should prove
His saving power ; but since nor healing juice,
Medicines or simples, could the rock produce,
The church he sought ; there to his Saviour pray'd ; 635
Then issu'd forth, secure of heavenly aid ;
And now, by name th' ETERNAL THREE address'd,
With hand outstretch'd the feeble knight he bless'd.

O ! virtua

O! virtue given to those who CHRIST adore!

Good Olivero felt his pains no more; 640

Again he firmly trod, with nerves renew'd,
While sage Sobrino, near, the wonder view'd.

Each day Sobrino found his strength deprest,
Each day the anguish of his wounds increas'd:
But when he, through the hermit's saving word, 645
Beheld the knight by miracle restor'd,

With humble penitence he begg'd the fire
To grant the ablution which our rites require.
He said; the sage his suit approv'd, and gave
The Christian cleansing in the limpid wave. 650

Nor this alone—with holy prayers he heal'd
His wounds, his strength renew'd, his pains dispell'd.

Not less Orlando, and each noble knight,
Rejoic'd to see the truth of Christian light
Disperse the Pagan darkness, than to see 655

Their lov'd compeer from pain and danger free.
But greater joy Rogero's soul confess'd,
While livelier faith and hope confirm'd his breast.

Rogero, by the tempest thither cast,
His hours in converse with the sage had past, 660
Who 'midst the warriors now in semblance mild
With useful lore the well-spent day beguil'd;

Taught

Taught them to steer through this bad world of strife,
Of wretchedness—unjustly titled life ;
Esteem'd by fools ! and warn'd them not to miss 665
The road that leads to everlasting bliss.

Now bade Orlando from the vessel bear
Bread, wine, and viands, store of grateful fare,
To heap the genial board ; and these he plac'd
Before the man of God, whose simple taste, 670
Long us'd to roots and pulse, he gently press'd
To share with them a more luxurious feast.

Their spirits thus refresh'd with wine and food,
The knights and hermit their discourse renew'd :
And, as it oft befalls in social life, 675
When round the circle vary'd subjects rise,
At length Rogero (whose high deeds were blown
Throughout the world) was to Orlando known,
Then Olivero, and Rinaldo found
In him the youth so far in arms renown'd ; 680
Nor had till then Rinaldo mark'd the knight,
With whom so late he met in single fight.
Sobrino knew the young Rogero well,
When first he met him at the hermit's cell,
Yet held his peace : but when the rest had heard 685
That this was he, Rogero so rever'd

For

For warlike feats—all eager round him press'd,
And each with open look and smiles address'd:
One grasp'd his hand; one close embracing held;
One on his cheek the kiss of friendship seal'd. 690

END OF THE TWENTY-FIRST BOOK.

THE
TWENTY-SECOND BOOK
OF
O R L A N D O.

THE ARGUMENT.

RINALDO promises his sister Bradamant to Rogero, at the instigation of the hermit, and with the concurrence of Orlando. The knights take their leave of the hermit, and sail to Marseilles. Astolpho dismisses the forces of king Senapus, who repair to their own country; and the duke himself returns to France, where he meets, at Marseilles, with Orlando, Rinaldo, Rogero, Olivero, and Sobrino. Charles, and all his nobles, prepare to welcome the conquering knights, who enter the gates of Paris in triumph. Great festival on the occasion. Dispute between Amon and his son Rinaldo concerning Bradamant, whom Amon had promised to Leon, son of the emperor Constantine. Distress of Bradamant and Rogero. The singular request of Bradamant to the emperor. She is taken away from the court by Amon, and closely confined in a castle. Rogero resolves to kill his rival Leon, and departs in disguise from Paris attended with a single squire. He arrives at Belgrado, where he assists the Bulgarians, commanded by their king, against the Greeks commanded by Constantine and Leon, and entirely defeats the latter. Leon, in admiration of the valour of the strange knight, conceives a secret friendship for him. Gratitude of the Bulgarians. Rogero departs in pursuit of Leon.

T H E
 TWENTY-SECOND BOOK
 O F
 O R L A N D O.

DISSENTION banish'd now from every thought,
 The trace of every past offence forgot;
 The lord of Mount Albano first address'd
 Renown'd Rogero, and the youth carefs'd,
 As one himself had found so well to wield 5
 His glorious weapons in the dangerous field;
 As one, whose courtesy so late he prov'd,
 For courtesy o'er every knight belov'd.
 By him were Buovo's sons * releas'd from bands,
 From Bertolagi and Maganza's hands: 10
 And much he griev'd, so long forbid to pay
 The debt he ow'd, till this auspicious day.
 While one in Afric's Pagan court remain'd,
 And one the cause of royal Charles maintain'd,

* VIVIAN and MALAGICI.

All greeting was deny'd—but when he view'd 15

Rogero here by hallow'd rites renew'd

To Christian life, full gladly he embrac'd

The wish'd occasion to redeem the past;

And zealous vows of future service made,

And grateful thanks and endless honours paid. 20

The holy fire, who saw, with placid look,

The cordial meeting, on their converse broke,

And thus began—No further can remain

(And this I trust without repulse to gain)

But, since by friendship you are drawn so nigh, 25

The bond to strengthen with a nearer tie ;

Since from your houses join'd (whose glorious name

Beholds no equal in the world of fame)

A line shall come, whose lustre must efface

The rays of Sol, thro' all his annual race ; 30

Whose honours shall descend from year to year,

And distant ages their renown reverse,

While in their spheres the starry orbs are roll'd :

So GOD reveals, so bids me now unfold.

Thus spoke the holy fire, and more he said, 35

Though less requir'd Rinaldo to persuade,

Who gladly to Rogero's vows resign'd

His Bradamant, the happy league to bind.

Good

Good Olivero and Anglante's lord
 Much prais'd between the knights the fair accord; 40
 And deem'd that Charles and Amon must approve,
 With all the realm of France, this noble love.

Thus they; but little yet to them was known
 That Amon, by consent of Pepin's son *,
 To Greece dispatch'd an envoy, with design 45
 To treat with Greece's emperor, Constantine;
 Who for his son had ask'd the martial fair,
 Leon his son, his mighty empire's heir;
 Who from the flying breath of distant fame
 (Herself unseen) receiv'd the lover's flame. 50
 Amon reply'd, that ere himself pursu'd
 The treaty, such a marriage to conclude,
 He to Rinaldo must the terms report,
 Rinaldo absent then from Charles's court,
 Who, soon returning, would with joy sincere 55
 The welcome news of such alliance hear;
 Yet, for the love he bore his noble son,
 He wish'd him to complete the league begun.

Meanwhile Rinaldo, from his father's view
 Remote, of Leon's suit no tidings knew, 60
 But, with Orlando's full consent, design'd
 His sister's with Rogero's hand to bind;

* CHARLEMAIN:

B b 2

While

While all the knights their union here approv'd,
But chief the hermit, who such union mov'd ;
Who deem'd that Amon would no less rejoice 65
At such a son of brave Rinaldo's choice.

That day and night, and half th' ensuing day,
In converse with the blest recluse they stay,
Unmindful of their ship ; though now the gales
With prosperous breath invite the ready sails. 70

The mariners impatiently attend
Their tardy lords, and many a message send
To urge their voyage, till the knightly crew
Prepare to bid the holy sage adieu.

Rogero of the sage his farewell took ; 75
Through whom his errors he for truth forsook.
Orlando to the youth return'd his sword,
To him the steed Frontino he restor'd,
With Hector's arms ; and thus his love express'd,
Since these he knew the warrior once possess'd. 80

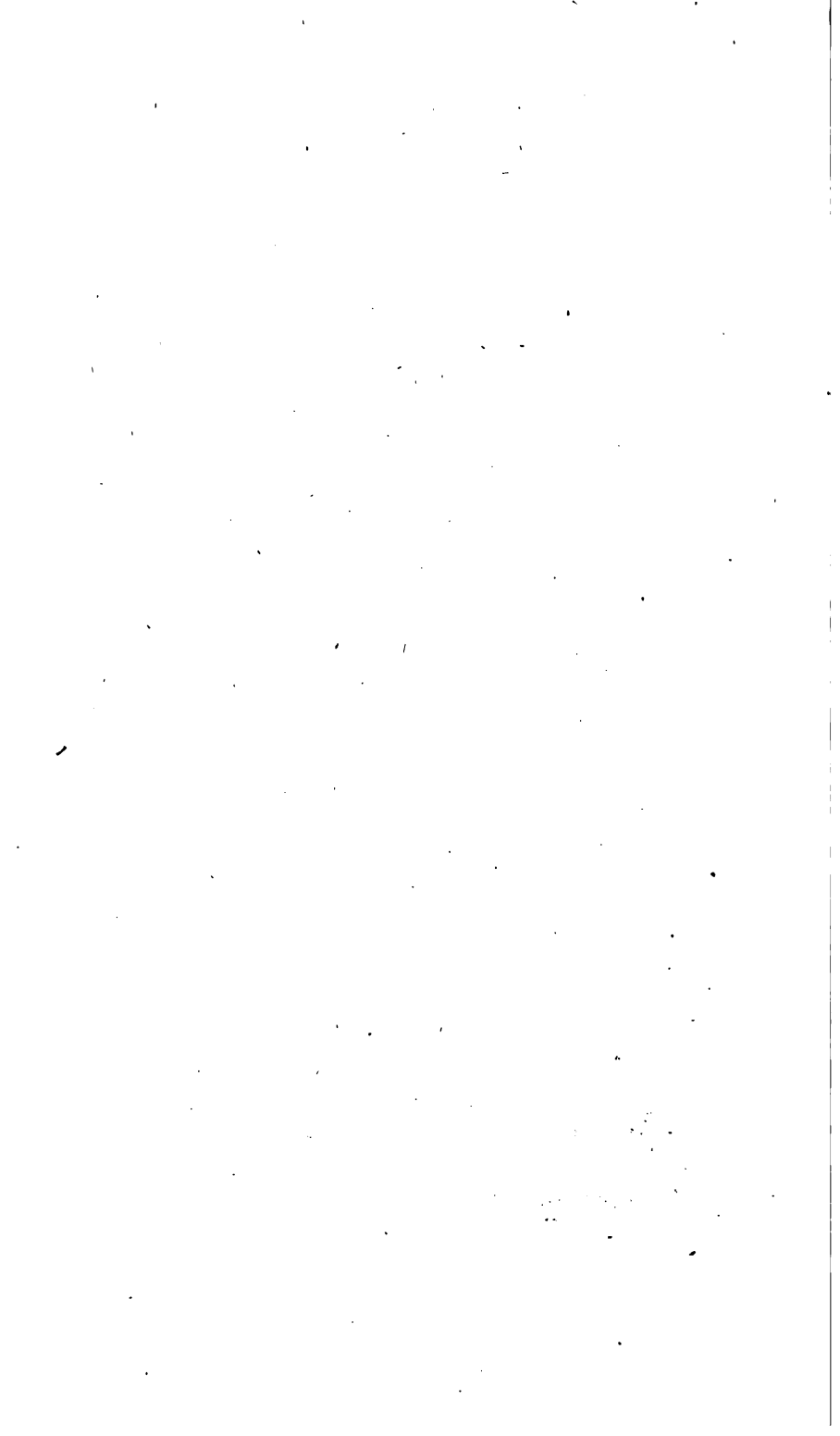
But though the Paladin might better claim
A title to the sword of magic fame,
Which he, with toil and peril huge obtain'd,
In Falerina's dreadful garden gain'd,
Than could Rogero, who the weapon ow'd
To him, whose gift Frontino had bestow'd,

A lawless



Blanchard del.

J. Caldwell sculp.



A lawless thief*! yet this, with generous mind,
Orlando with his other arms resign'd.

The pious hermit bless'd the warlike train,
Departing now their vessel to regain : 90
The seamen plung'd their oars beneath the wave,
And to the favouring wind their canvas gave.
Calm was the sky; nor vows nor prayers they need,
For fair Marseilles their rapid course to speed.
The port secur'd, we leave them there to stay, 95
Till brave Aftolpho thither we convey.

When duke Aftolpho had the conquest known,
(A bloody conquest, by the victor won
With little joy) and deem'd that France no more
Could fear an insult from the Pagan power : 100
He purpos'd that with all his numerous bands
The king of Nubiā to his native lands
Should homeward now his former course pursue,
By which he late against Biserta drew.
Already with Ugero's son † return'd 105
The fleet, whose meeting Afric's lord had mourn'd,
When, wonders new! scarce leaving every ship,
The fable bands had issu'd from the deep,
Sudden the poop and prow no more appear'd,
No more the cords are strain'd, the masts are rear'd; 110

* BRUNELLO.

† DUDON.

Each vanish'd bark its ancient form receives,
And all th' Armada shrinks again to leaves !
The rapid eddies blew, and airy light
Whirl'd them aloft, and scatter'd far from sight.

From Afric now withdrew the Nubian force, 115
A countless host of mingled foot and horse ;
But first Astolpho, for the troops bestow'd,
To great Senapus paid the thanks he ow'd,
Who drain'd his country's power such aid to yield,
And led them forth in person to the field, 120
To him Astolpho, in the bag confin'd,
Commits the fury of the southern wind,
That fury, wont at midmost day to sweep
The unstable desert, like the billowy deep ;
But charg'd him, when his native land he gain'd, 125
To free the wind in durance now detain'd.
Soon as the host approach'd to Atlas' heights,
Each steed again (as blameless Turpin writes)
Became a stone ; and thence on foot the bands
Return'd in safety to the Nubian lands, 130

Now time requires Astolpho should repair
Once more to France ; but first he bends his care
The strongest forts in Afric won to guard
From all assaults ; then for his flight prepar'd,

He

He mounts his griffin-horse, and through the skies 135

Sardinia reaches ; from Sardinia flies

To Corfus' shore ; then hovers o'er the main,

Declining to the left his courser's rein ;

At length to rich Provence with speed descends,

And in Maremma his long voyage ends. 140

When now he turns his thought to set at large

The feather'd steed ; for so his sacred charge

Th' apostle gave, that when the Christian knight

Provence had reach'd, he there should end his flight ;

No more with bit or rein the steed confine, 145

But freely to his liberty resign.

Already had that world (whose orb contains

What mortals lose, and make our loss her gains)

Of every sound his magic horn depriv'd ;

For, soon as in those holy seats arriv'd 150

The glorious knight, his bugle lost its power,

And not a breath could wake the terrors more.

Astolpho reach'd Marseilles, what time the band

Of five brave knights had anchor'd on the strand :

Orlando, Olivero now restor'd 155

To health and strength, Albano's mighty lord * ;

With sage Sobrino ; but, above the rest,

Rogero, first of courteous knights confess'd.

* RINALDO.

The dear remembrance of their comrade kill'd,
Each Paladin with generous sorrow fill'd; 160
And, in their noble breasts, that joy restrain'd
Which else had follow'd such a conquest gain'd.

And now to royal Charles the tidings spread
Of Agramant and stern Gradasso dead;
Of old Sobrino in the victor's chain; 165
Of valiant Brandimart untimely slain;
Of young Rogero, now baptiz'd, he heard;
His heart reviv'd, his face in smiles appear'd,
Deliver'd from the yoke of war, that late
Oppress'd his shoulders with the galling weight. 170
To honour those whose glorious hands sustain
His empire's fame, the pillars of his reign,
He sends the nobles from his regal seat,
Along the Seine the conquering chiefs to meet;
Next issues from the walls himself, enclos'd 175
With kings and dukes in bright array dispos'd:
His royal consort near, and at her side
Fair courtly dames in splendid vesture ride,
Imperial Charles, the Paladins, nor less
The numerous nobles and the thronging press, 180
Than those, by nature bound in nearer tie,
On great Orlando bend a raptur'd eye;

On

On him, and all his train, alike bestow
The love and reverence to their worth they owe,
While from the tongues of thousands, echo'd round, 185
The names of Clarmont and Mograna sound.

Embraces now, and mutual greetings done,
Rinaldo, Olivero, Milo's * son,
To Charles' high prefence young Rogero bring,
And tell his lineage to the listening king ; 190

That from Rogero, late of Rifa nam'd,
The warrior born, was like his father fam'd
For virtuous deeds, and well in many a fight
Our troops could witness to his dauntless might.

Meantime with Bradamant, Marphisa fair 195
Appears, a friendly and illustrious pair !

This with a sister's love Rogero strain'd,
But that her virgin modesty detain'd.

The emperor bade Rogero now his feat
Again resume, who lowly at his feet 200

In reverence stood ; and by his side he plac'd
The noble youth, with highest honours grac'd.

With pomp triumphant, and with festive state,
The warriors enter Paris' lofty gate.
The streets are green with boughs of cheerful bays, 205
Rich tap'stry covers all the public ways ;

* ORLANDO.

At

At gates and windows dames and damsels stand,
 (A beauteous sight!) and from unsparing hand
 With smiles upon the victor rain in showers
 A thousand wreaths, and palms, and odorous flowers,
 On every side, before th' admiring eyes, 211
 The sculptur'd arch and figur'd trophy rise,
 That, wrapt in smoke and flame Biserta show,
 And every deed achiev'd against the foe.
 Here various throngs in games and sports convene, 215
 There some attend the mimes and story'd scene;
 While all around these words inscrib'd appear:
 THE GREAT DELIVERERS OF THE LAND REVERE!
 Amidst the trumpet's clangor echoing round,
 Sonorous fifes, and every tuneful sound: 220
 Amidst the shouts, applauses, clamours loud,
 And maddening raptures of th' unruly crowd,
 The glorious emperor his palace gains;
 Dismounts, and there the numerous throng detains
 For many days, with sport on sport increas'd, 225
 The mask, the dance, the tournament and feast.

One day Rinaldo gave his fire to know
 His promise on Rogero to bestow
 His sister's hand; a promise duly weigh'd,
 With Olivero and Orlando made; 230
 When

When each agreed the virgin ne'er could find
 Another consort of such noble kind ;
 Much less a youth in virtue or in fame
 To rise superior to Rogero's name,

He said : with anger Amon heard his son, 235
 Who durst (unask'd of him) his purpose own
 To raise Rogero to his sister's bed,
 Whom he, with higher thoughts, design'd to wed
 The heir of Constantine, not one whose hand
 No sceptre sway'd, who shar'd nor wealth nor land, 240
 The boast of blood but little can avail,
 And virtue less, when large possessions fail,

But, more than Amon, Beatrice inflam'd
 Against her son's presumption, loud exclaim'd :
 Abroad, at home, she ceas'd not to declare 245
 Rogero never should possess the fair ;
 Restless ambition kindling in her breast
 To see her daughter empress of the east,
 Rinaldo to his purpose fix'd remain'd,
 And what he promis'd firmly yet maintain'd, 250
 The mother, who believes her daughter's will
 With hers concurr'd, incites the virgin still
 To avow, she sooner would forego the light,
 Than live the consort of a needy knight ;

With

With threats for her t' abjure a parent's name,
 If from a brother she receiv'd such shame ; 256
 And vow'd Rinaldo's power in vain should prove
 To force his sister to Rogero's love.

Unhappy Bradamant, with downcast eye
 Appear'd, nor to her mother made reply. 260
 Such was her reverence of maternal sway,
 That filial duty urg'd her to obey,
 While her free soul disdain'd to avow th' intent,
 To which her will could never yield consent.
 But ah ! what will is hers, when passion reigns 265
 In every pulse, and every wish constrains ?
 She dares not disapprove, nor dares appear
 In mind compos'd, but fights with doubt and fear ;
 And when retir'd from every eye apart,
 She pours the tear to ease her burthen'd heart ; 270
 Beats her white bosom, rends her golden hair,
 And thus in secret vents her soul's despair.

Alas ! I mourn those vows, which she whose will
 Should rule o'er mine, forbids me to fulfil ;
 Shall I, of filial love forgetful grown, 275
 Thus to a mother's hopes prefer my own ?
 What greater crime, than to neglect the claim
 A parent holds, can stain a daughter's name ?

Shall I a comfort choofe where ſhe denies,
Who aſks obedience by the cloſeſt ties? 280
Yet, ah!—ſo ſtrong muſt filial duty prove,
To make me, lov'd Rogero! e'er remove
My thoughts from thee!—expunge my faithful fires,
To nourish other hopes, and new deſires!
Or ſhall I every dear reſpect forego, 285
Which pious children to their parents owe,
And only prize the bliſs that ſways my heart?
Ah! me—too well I know a daughter's part.
I know—but ah! ſuch knowledge nought avails,
When paſſion conquers, and when reaſon fails! 290
Love rules—as he directs, I give my hand;
I think—I act—I ſpeak—at his command!
Of noble Beatrice, and Amon born,
I, ſlave to love—am made of love the ſcorn!
Grant I offend my parents—I may live 295
To hope their pardon—but will Love forgive,
If him I ſlight?—no reaſon will ſuffice
To calm his anger—till his victim dies!
How have I long unweary'd fought to draw
Rogero to embrace the Chriſtian law? 300
At length I have prevail'd—and lo! the fruit
Another gathers of my vain purſuit!

Thus.

Thus never for herself the bee renews
 Her annual treasure of nectareous dew !
 First let me die—but never be it said, 305
 I any comfort, save Rogero, wed ;
 And should I dare dispute my parents' sway,
 At least in this a brother I obey ;
 Whose better judgment unobscur'd appears
 With weakness that attends declining years. 310
 Orlando, what Rinaldo seeks, approves,
 And both alike confirm our mutual loves :
 A pair, whom all mankind in honour place
 Above the rest of our illustrious race.
 Our choice approv'd by those, whose merits shine 315
 The flower of Clarmont and Mograna's line ;
 Ah ! why must Amon claim peculiar right,
 Before Rinaldo and Anglante's knight ?
 It must not be—the treaty scarce begun,
 Not Constantine can claim me for his son, 320
 But to Rogero plighted, Heaven has made us one. }

If thus the virgin mourn'd with grief oppress'd,
 Not greater calm enjoy'd Rogero's breast.
 The fatal tidings, through th' imperial town
 Yet undivulg'd, by him too well was known ; 325
 And oft he mourn'd his fortune's cruel spite,
 That robb'd his soul of every wish'd delight ;

Nor gave him sceptres, wealth or ample land,
Oft given the worthlefs with unſparing hand.
Of every other good mankind receive, 330
Which virtue can acquire, or nature give ;
He view'd them center'd in himſelf, and more
Than ever yet a youth poſſeſs'd before.
The comeliſt perſon to his grace muſt yield,
No prowefs ſcarce can meet him in the field ; 335
And none of fame's firſt ſons have nobler ſhin'd,
For birth illuſtrious, and a kingly mind.
The vulgar herd, that honours oft diſpoſe,
By turns exalting theſe, depreſſing thoſe ;
That wretched vulgar riches only prize, 340
Above the good, the generous, and the wiſe.
Sense, virtue, daring, all that makes deſert,
The graceful perſon, and the blameleſs heart,
In ſordid breſts no favour'd place can hold,
Till back'd by charms of ill-perſuading gold. 345
Alone exempt we from the vulgar name,
The man whom wiſdom gives a better claim :
Not ſceptres, crowns, or mitres, can exclude
Kings, popes, or emp'rors, from the motley crowd,
But wiſdom only, and true judgment given, 350
To few, the favourites of all-ruling Heav'n !

Rogero

Rogero then—If Amon's secret aim
Would raise his daughter to an empress' name,
Let him with Leon yet the league delay,
Till Phœbus once has cours'd his annual way: 355
I trust, ere then, in fight to overthrow
Both fire and son, and lay their glories low;
And when this hand has Leon's sceptre won,
I may deserve the rank of Amon's son.
But should he, as he threatens, his daughter wed, 360
And give her now to bless the Grecian's bed;
The promise, made me by Rinaldo, slight,
Made by his kinsman, great Anglante's knight;
Which, to confirm, that holy sage appear'd;
The marquis Olivero present heard, 365
With king Sobrino—shall I tamely mourn?
By me such insult like a woman borne?
First let me die—but can I therefore move
My arms against the fire of her I love?
Grant now, that Amon perish by my sword, 370
With all his race—would that relief afford
To what I feel?—Ah! no—'twould but ensure
Increase of woe to what I now endure.
Shall I, whose dearest wish was still to gain
My fair-one's love, her hatred thus obtain? 375
For

For should I slay her fire, and on his race
 My fury vent, would not such deed efface
 All former kindness? Could she then bestow
 Her hand on one so prov'd her kindred's foe?—
 Yet must I, injur'd thus, for ever grieve? 385
 Forbid it Heaven!—Death shall at least relieve
 My breaking heart—but ere I die, shall fall,
 With juster doom, that Leon, cause of all!
 The wretch, who comes to rend a lover's peace,
 Shall, with his father slain, this arm confess: 385
 Not Helen's rape on Troy such woes entail'd:
 Not Proserpine, in elder times assail'd
 By rash Pirithöos, could from Pluto's ire
 Such vengeance urge, as now my soul, on fire,
 Prepares to wreak upon the son and fire. 390
 Perchance thou griev'st not, idol of my heart!
 From thy Rogero for this Greek to part:
 And wilt thou, for thy fire, thy kindred's sake,
 Forego my love, a stranger's hand to take?
 Ah! much I doubt thou rather seek'st to give 395
 Ease to a parent than my woes relieve;
 And, at thy nuptial hour, prefer'st to see
 Cæsar thy spouse, to one so poor as me!
 Yet—can it be that e'er a regal name,
 The mean regard that pomp and titles claim, 400

With all the wealth of all the east combin'd,
Should taint my Bradamant's exalted mind;
Should make her less esteem her promise given,
And break that faith so often vow'd to Heaven;
Nor rather stand for Amon's wrath prepar'd, 405
Than e'er forget what once her lips declar'd?

Rogero thus; while oft some stranger near
Would chance his sighs and fond complaints to hear:
And hence the fair, for whose dear sake he griev'd,
With tears the tidings of his woes receiv'd: 410
But most she mourn'd Rogero should suspect,
She, for this Greek, could e'er her vows neglect.
To ease his fears, and from his breast remove
A thought injurious to her spotless love;
She from her menials chose a trusty maid, 415
By whom she thus her secret thoughts convey'd.

Such as I was, Rogero! will I live,
And more, if more can be, while Heaven shall give
This pulse to beat—let love, or smile, or frown,
Let fortune raise me high, or cast me down, 420
In me behold a rock of truth, that braves
The howling tempest and the dashing waves:
Not spring or winter have I chang'd my place,
Nor aught shall ever shake my steadfast base.

First softest metals, when anneal'd in flame, 425
 Shall sever adamant's impervious frame,
 Ere cruel fortune, or a stranger's love,
 Shall, from my soul her constant faith remove.
 First shall the stream to Alpine heights ascend,
 Ere to new paths my wandering feet shall bend. 430
 To thee, Rogero, I my heart resign;
 (Nor weak the empire o'er a heart like mine)
 Think not that riches can my thoughts entice—
 A noble heart yields not to such a price!
 Nor proud nobility, nor dazzling height 435
 Of regal state, that lures the vulgar sight;
 Nor beauty, that can changeful bosoms move,
 Shall from Rogero e'er estrange my love.
 Fear not another form my heart shall shake:
 My heart, by proof, not fram'd of wax, to take 440
 Each new impression—Love his shafts may send;
 But thy dear image shall my breast defend.
 Ivory, or stone, or gems of hardest vein,
 Where forms impress'd by sculptur'd art remain,
 May easier break, than ever, to receive 445
 Another form, the first impression leave.
 Such is my heart, which love shall sooner break,
 Than e'er compel a second form to take.

These words of greeting from the noble maid,
Fair hope and comfort to his soul convey'd ; 450
Words, that had power a thousand times to give
The lover life, and bid the dying live.

Now Bradamant to what she thus declar'd,
A stronger proof of generous truth prepar'd ;
Her courage rous'd, each nice respect she broke, 455
To royal Charles she came, and thus she spoke.

If e'er my deeds my sovereign's grace have mov'd,
Be what I now demand, O king ! approv'd ;
But plight thy royal word, ere yet exprest
Thou know'st my suit, to grant what I request. 460
And sure my purpose, when disclos'd, I trust
Thou wilt not deem ignoble or unjust.

O maid belov'd ! (imperial Charles reply'd)
To worth like thine what suit shall be deny'd ?
And here I solemn swear, should'st thou require 465
My kingdom's half, to grant thy full desire.

The boon I ask is this, (the virgin said)
Thou shalt not suffer one this hand to wed,
But he, O king ! whose skill in battle shown,
Whose courage and whose force eclipse my own. 470
Who seeks my love, I first his arm will try,
At sword and shield in equal joust defy :

The

The first who wins shall take me for his spouse,
The vanquish'd to another bear his vows.

She said; and princely Charles with smiles rejoin'd,
That well her suit befeem'd her dauntless mind, 476
And bade her rest in certain faith assur'd,
That all she wish'd his royal word secur'd.

In secret, tidings of this converse came
That day to Amon and his haughty dame. 480
Against their daughter each alike exclaim'd;
With deep resentment each alike inflam'd;
Too well in this perceiv'd some close intent,
More to Rogero than to Leon meant;
And hence the virgin from the court they bore, 485
To a strong castle on the sea-beat shore;
They held her there a prisoner close confin'd,
And thence to send her to the east design'd;
Resolv'd, whate'er befel, she should forsake
Rogero, and the hand of Leon take. 490

The generous maid no less for mildness prais'd
Of female virtue, than for courage rais'd
Above her sex, with modest meekness bore
Sufferings inflicted by a father's power;
Yet was she firm the sharpest woes to prove 495
Of bonds, or death, to keep unstain'd her love.

Rinaldo who, by Amon's crafty flight,
 Beheld his sister ravish'd from his sight,
 No more at his disposal to remain ;
 His promise to Rogero pledg'd in vain ; 500
 Forgetting all respect to parents ow'd,
 Against his father vents complaints aloud.
 But little Amon heeds, resolv'd his voice,
 And not his son's, should rule his daughter's choice.

This heard Rogero, fearing yet to mourn 505
 The virgin, from his arms for ever torn ;
 Should Leon live, he doubts long suit may gain
 Her willing hand, or force at length constrain ;
 He little knew the late convention made
 With royal Charles, that well her truth display'd ; 510
 And hence (to none disclos'd his secret mind)
 The death of Leon in his soul design'd ;
 Resolv'd, if valour could assert his own,
 The sire and son to slay, and seize the Grecian throne.

Those arms he took which Trojan Hector wore,
 Which Mandricardo since in triumph bore ; 516
 Then with the saddle good Frontino press'd ;
 But chang'd his wonted furcoat, shield, and crest.
 He chose not now his fam'd device to wield,
 The argent eagle in a heavenly field ; 520
 But

But on a ground, where deep vermilion glow'd,
 A unicorn, all lily-white he show'd ;
 Then singled from his train a squire well try'd,
 In whom for truth he safely might confide,
 Sole partner of his way, with strict command 525
 To keep his name conceal'd in every land.

He pass'd the Maes and Rhine, the country pass'd
 Of Ostericchie, and Hungaria trac'd ;
 Along the Ister's banks his course pursu'd,
 And, on the right, at length Belgrado view'd ; 530
 Where to the Danube join'd, with double force
 The Sava to the ocean bends his course.

He sees encamp'd a numerous army spread
 Beneath th' imperial standard, proudly led
 By Constantine, to repossess the town, 535
 Which from his rule Bulgaria's powers had won.

There Constantine himself in person came
 With him his son and every chief of fame,
 To assert the honour of the Grecian name. }

Without Belgrado, stretch'd in prospect wide, 540
 Down from the mountain to the subject tide,
 Before the Greeks Bulgaria's army stood ;
 And either army drank of Sava's flood.

The Grecians o'er the stream prepar'd to throw
 A length of bridge ; but this their wary foe 545

With arms oppos'd; and fierce the contest grew
On either side, when near Rogero drew.
Four times the Greeks Bulgaria's bands surpass'd,
And barks they brought, and bridges fram'd to cast
Athwart the stream; and oft their foes defy'd, 550
With threats by force to gain the adverse side.
Back from the stream meantime, with cautious art
Leon retir'd, and on a different part
Far wheeling round the plain, the banks essay'd,
And join'd his bridges, and his passage made. 555

With twice ten thousand foot and horse he crost,
And on their flank assail'd Bulgaria's host
With sudden force—the emp'ror, who descry'd
His son advancing on the further side,
With barks to barks conjoin'd, his bridges cast, 560
And with the remnant of his army pass'd.
The king and leader of Bulgaria's band,
Active in fight, and prudent in command,
(Vatranes nam'd) in vain with dauntless breast
Against the Greeks his force and skill address'd: 565
Him Leon met, and with a numerous train
Surrounding, hurl'd him headlong on the plain,
Whom bravely scorning midst his foes to yield,
A thousand weapons slaughter'd on the field.

The

The fierce Bulgarians fought yet unsubdu'd; 570

But when on earth their king and chief they view'd,

And found on every side the tempest grow,

They turn'd their backs, and fled before the foe.

Rogero, mingled with the Greeks, beheld

Their arms prevailing, and Bulgaria's quell'd, 575

And now, resolv'd their battle to restore,

(For Constantine he loath'd, but Leon more)

He spurr'd Frontino; rapid as the wind

Frontino flying, left each steed behind.

And soon arriving, where the routed train 580

Fled to the mountain, and forsook the plain;

He breath'd new warmth in every heartless breast,

To meet the Greeks; then plac'd his lance in rest,

While with such force his thundering steed he drove,

His looks might strike with terror Mars or Jove! 585

Amid the Grecians, in the van he spy'd

A daring youth in vests with crimson dy'd,

That o'er his arms, resplendent to behold,

Of finest silk embroider'd, shone with gold:

Nephew to Constantine, his sister's son, 590

By him belov'd and honour'd as his own:

Rogero's spear his shield and corset tore,

And issu'd at his back besmear'd with gore;

He

He left him dead, and Balifarda drew
Against the nearest of the Grecian crew : 595

On these, on those, by turns the steel he sped;
And here he cleft the trunk, and there the head;
Arms, legs, and hands, and thighs, afunder hew'd,
While blood, in gushing streams, the vale embu'd.
Such slaughter seen, no Grecian durst withstand 600
Th' unequall'd force of that destructive hand :

The face of war is chang'd—and those who fled
From bands, which Constantine victorious led,
Now felt new courage rise in every breast,
And with recover'd force the Grecians press'd : 605
At once the broken ranks were seen to yield,
And every standard turn'd to quit the field.

High on a hill imperial Leon plac'd,
Beheld below his numerous squadrons chac'd;
And while he mark'd them with a sad survey, 610
Where from afar the plain in prospect lay,
Fix'd on the knight he gaz'd, by whom alone
His men were slain, and all his camp o'erthrown;
Yet could not, while he felt the victor's hand,
Withhold the praise such valiant deeds demand. 615
Well by his shining arms with gold inlaid,
His upper vest and shield's device display'd,

He

He knew the warrior came not with his foes,
Though now against him their defence he chose.
His more than human force with wondering eyes 620
He view'd; as if some Angel from the skies
Was sent, amidst the Grecians to dispense
The wrath of Heaven for some unknown offence.
Thus what in vulgar breasts had hatred rais'd,
With nobler thoughts exalted Leon prais'd. 625
As when some mother (even in anger mild)
Chides from her sight, chastis'd, her darling child;
The sighing innocent, with tearful eyes,
Nor to the father, nor the sister flies;
But turns to her, and soft in infant charms, 630
Hangs at her breast, and fondles in her arms.
So Leon seems, who sees Rogero's hand
O'erthrow the first, and threat each remnant band,
For less the scourge of hostile arms can move
His anger, than the glorious deeds that prove 635
The champion's valour, warm his soul to love. }

While Leon him esteems, behold the knight
With ill return such friendly thoughts requite:
Him long he seeks, and calls aloud, in vain,
The Greek to meet him on th' embattled plain; 640
But still, with caution, through the warlike lines
The prudent Greek th' unequal fight declines.

Leon,

Leon, left threatening fate should seize on all,
 Commands the squadrons from the field to call
 With trumpet's sound; and sends to entreat his fire
 Beyond the stream for safety to retire, 646
 If safety might be found; while with his power
 Himself the bridges fought he pass'd before,
 And now securely reach'd the further shore. }

What numbers by the fierce Bulgarians dy'd 650
 Or captives groan'd! and, but th' opposing tide
 Forbade pursuit, all with their blood had stain'd
 The hostile sword, or prisoners there remain'd.
 Some from the bridges fell, and whelm'd beneath
 The rushing current, found unlook'd-for death. 655
 Some with swift foot to reach the river fled,
 And some were captives to Belgrado led.

Such was the fight, on that eventful day,
 In which their king and leader breathless lay;
 And loss and shame Bulgaria's bands had known,
 Save for that aid the stranger's arm had shown: 661
 The knight, who pictur'd on a crimson field,
 A unicorn, of snow-white hue, reveal'd.

Now all, who saw to him what palms they ow'd,
 With shouts and clamours round the victor crowd:
 In awful homage bent the circling band; 666
 One kiss'd his feet, one bolder kiss'd his hand:

Each

Each throng'd on each, more near and near they
press'd,

Who nearest view'd esteem'd his fortune blest;

But he most blest, whose touch that man explor'd,

Scarce held a man, but like a God ador'd! 671

While all on him with voice united cry'd,

Henceforth to lead them on—their king and guide.

Rogero to their general suit agreed,

As king to rule them, and as chief to lead, 675

But would not truncheon then nor sceptre bear,

Nor to Belgrado on that day repair:

He Leon must pursue, ere from his sword

He further 'scap'd, or safe repass'd the ford:

Since many a league he travers'd hill and plain, 680

To fate his great revenge with Leon slain.

This said; he parted thence, and eager flew

Through ways the squadrons taught him to pursue,

By which the Greek to reach the bridges try'd,

Ere danger, near at hand, the pass deny'd. 685

Rogero follow'd close, inflam'd with ire,

Nor call'd, nor waited for his lagging squire:

Yet such advantage Leon's flight could meet,

(For flight it must be call'd, and not retreat)

He found the passage free, he crost the stream, 690

Then broke each bridge, and left the barks on flame.

Rogero

Rogero reach'd the banks when day withdrew
His parting beam, nor where to rest he knew;
And thence he journey'd by the moon's pale light,
But yet no town, nor castle met his sight. 695

Unknowing of his way, all night he press'd
His faithful steed, till, red in splendor drest,
Sol's eastern car the twilight gloom dispell'd,
When, on the left, a city he beheld.

There all the day he purpos'd to remain 700
To amend the wrong Frontino might sustain,
On whom, nor freed from bit, nor eas'd from toil,
That day he journey'd many a weary mile.

For Constantine Unguardo held the place,
A man exalted in his sovereign's grace; 705
And now (in dangerous times) a numerous force
The walls contain'd, of mingled foot and horse.

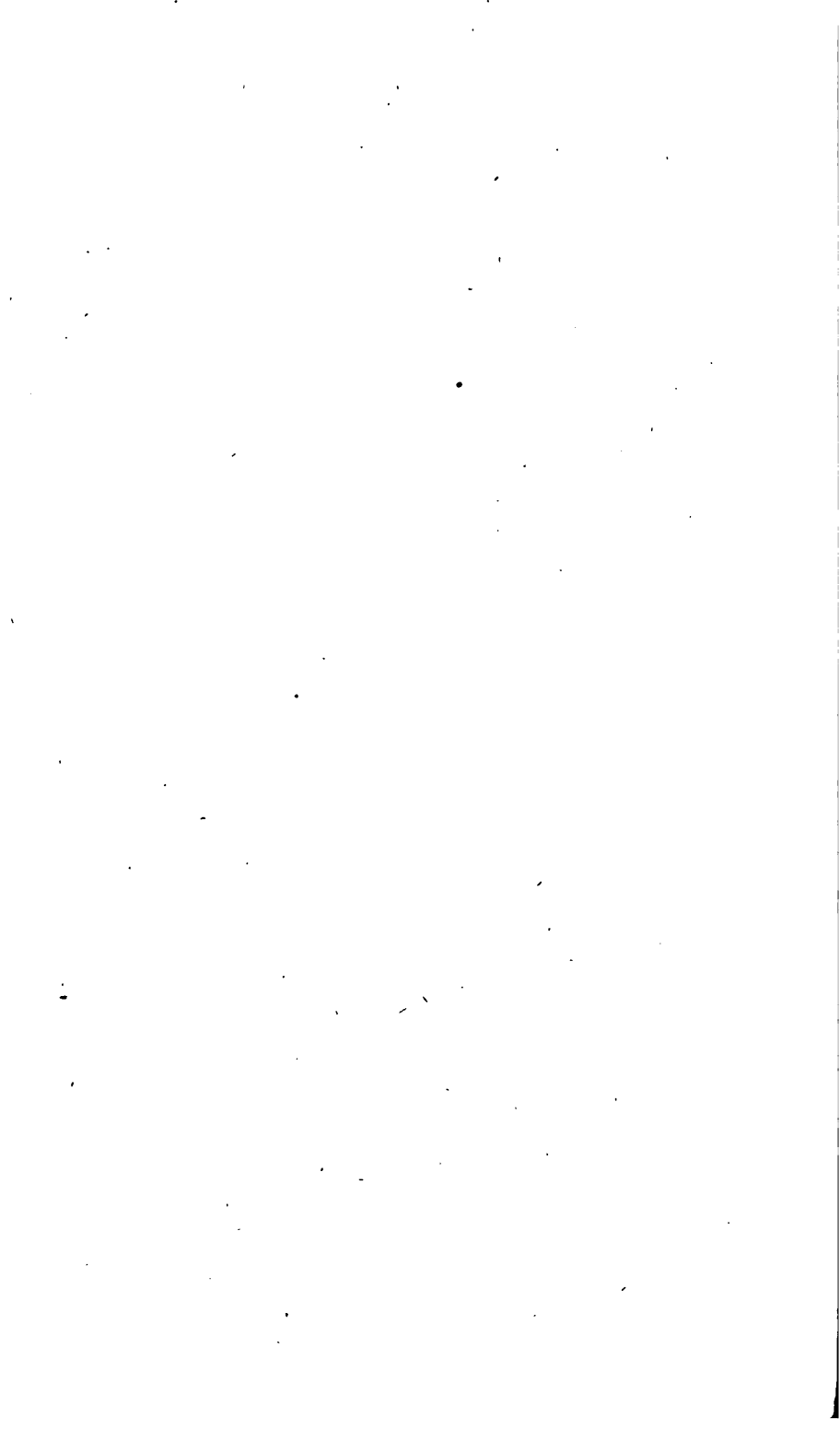
Rogero enter'd, when, at evening light,
Arriv'd for shelter a Romanian knight,
Who present view'd the deeds his valour wrought,
When late to aid Bulgaria's troops he fought. 711

This knight had scarce escap'd the bloody strife,
And still he trembled for his threaten'd life;
And still he saw in fancy's troubled eye,
The furious chief pursue, the Grecians fly. 715

Soon

Soon as his fight explor'd the warrior-shield,
The noted ensign and vermilion field,
He knew the knight, whose arm such buckler bore,
Was he that dy'd the plains in Grecian gore.

END OF THE TWENTY-SECOND BOOK.



THE
TWENTY-THIRD BOOK
OF
O R L A N D O.

Vol. II.

D d

THE A R G U M E N T.

ROGERO is betrayed in his sleep, and made prisoner by Unguardo, one of Constantine's governors. He is then delivered over to Theodora, sister to Constantine, desirous to revenge the death of her son killed in the battle by Rogero. The challenge of Bradamant is published by proclamation. She returns to the court. Leon generously delivers Rogero from prison: afterwards, not knowing him to be Rogero, he engages him to enter the lists with Bradamant in his stead. Rogero, under the name and ensigns of Leon, fights with Bradamant, and then retires in despair to the woods. Lamentation of Bradamant. Marphisa pleads the cause of Rogero with Charles, and contests the claim of Leon. Orlando and Rinaldo side with her, and Amon opposes them.

THE
 TWENTY-THIRD BOOK
 OF
 ORLANDO.

ROGERO, by his enterprize begun,
 The field from Leon and the emperor won;
 So far confided in his single might
 For sure success in every future fight,
 He deem'd himself, through thousands in array 5
 Of horse and foot, could force his bloody way,
 With single arm the fire and son to slay. }
 But she *, who wills not man's presumptuous mind
 Should dare to promise all he hop'd to find,
 Soon taught him how she chang'd from high to low, 10
 And now a friend became, and now a foe:
 For lo! the knight, who from the sanguine strife
 Of routed Greeks had scarcely 'scap'd with life,

* FORTUNE.

Now to Uguardo welcome tidings brought,
That the fierce chief (whose arm such ruin wrought 15
On Constantine, that many a rolling year
Could scarce the loss in that defeat repair)
All day and night within those walls remain'd :
Hence, favouring Fortune, by her lock detain'd,
From him, their prisoner made, would haply bring 20
Peace to their country, safety to their king ;
Conclude the war with one decisive stroke,
And on the proud Bulgarians fix the yoke.

Uguardo, from the troops, that smit with dread,
To him for refuge from the battle fled, 25
(For numbers, band by band, arriv'd, who try'd
In vain to pass the bridge, or ford the tide)
Had heard what slaughtering rage the Greeks pursu'd,
How half the host lay buried in their blood ;
That one sole champion, who an army brav'd, 30
One suffering camp destroy'd, and one had sav'd ;
And much he marvell'd with himself to know,
That, self-conducted to his fate, the foe
Fell in the snare ; and, with a cheerful look,
His joyful speech his secret triumph spoke. 35
He stay'd till sleep had clos'd Rogero's eyes,
Then sent, in arms, his people to surprize

Th'

Th' unconscious knight, whom, sunk in rest profound,
In bed they seiz'd, and fast with fetters bound.

What could Rogero, when he wak'd, and spy'd 40
His naked limbs with cords ignobly ty'd?

By his own shield the champion thus betray'd,

In Novengrado's walls was captive made

To glad Unguardo, first of all mankind

For stern demeanour and a ruthless mind, 45

Unguardo now a trusty envoy sent,

Who with the tidings to the emperor went.

Imperial Constantine, his routed powers

That pass'd the stream, that night from Sava's shores,

Had safe to Beleteca's town convey'd, 50

Whose rule Androphilus, his kinsman, sway'd;

The fire of him, who first amid the fight,

With shatter'd cuirass felt th' Herculean might

Of that brave warrior's unresisted hands,

Whom stern Unguardo held in captive bands. 55

The emp'ror now commands with heedful care

The walls to strengthen, and the works repair;

For much he doubted the Bulgarian host,

That such a warrior for their chief could boast,

Would rest not here, but to the last pursue 60

The scatter'd remnants of the Grecian crew:

But, he a prisoner made, no more alarms
The monarch felt, nor fear'd the world in arms.
Joy swell'd his soul, and scarce by words express'd
Beam'd in his face, while oft his speech confess'd 65
The warmest hopes—Bulgaria's name, I trust,
Shall soon (he cry'd) be humbled to the dust.

As he who views beneath his stronger hand
The foe dismember'd, seems assur'd to stand
Of certain palms—exulting thus appear'd 70
The emperor, when Rogero's fate he heard,
Nor more rejoic'd the fire than generous son;
Not only as he deem'd Belgrado won
From this event, and all the lands that lay
Submitted to Bulgaria's haughty sway; 75
But, as he meant each friendly art to prove,
To bend the warrior's soul to peace and love,
And win him to his side; with him to friend,
The valiant peers that Charlemain defend
He views unmov'd; nor envies him the fame 80
Of great Orlando, or Rinaldo's name.

Far different passions Theodora felt,
On whose ill-fated son Rogero dealt
The speeding lance, that in his cuirass stood,
And issu'd at his back with reeking blood. 85
This

This dame her brother Constantine address'd;
Before his presence low' her suit she press'd,
And clasp'd his knees, while fast the tears pursu'd
Each others course, and all her breast bedew'd.

Ne'er will I quit these feet, my liege! (she said) 90
Till on the wretch, by whom my child is dead,
Thou giv'st me to revenge a mother's sighs,
While now a captive in our power he lies.
Thy sister's son!—reflect how thee he lov'd;
Ah! think for thee what loyal deeds he prov'd: 95
And wilt thou hear his blood for justice call,
Nor on the murderer's head avenge his fall?
Behold, in pity of the Grecians woe,
How Heaven has freed us from so dire a foe!
And, like some bird in toils unheeded caught, 100
Him unsuspecting to our hand has brought:
To me, O gracious prince! this wretch consign,
O let me with his pains alleviate mine!
Then shall my offspring, on the Stygian shore,
His death no longer unatton'd deplore. 105

She said; and sobbing deep, with every art
Of female grief assail'd the monarch's heart,
And prostrate, from his feet refus'd to move,
Though Constantine with speech and gesture strove

To raise the dame: the dame still closer press'd, 110
 Till forc'd at length, he granted her request;
 And, as she will'd, he issu'd his command
 To bring the knight, and yield him to her hand.

To cruel Theodora thus convey'd,
 The champion of the unicorn was made 115
 Her wretched thrall, whose unrelenting mind
 The direst death, of most opprobrious kind,
 For him esteem'd too mild; her thoughts she bent
 With every pain her captive to torment,
 That power could heap, or cruelty invent. 120
 With arms, and feet, and neck in shackles bound,
 Deep in a dreary tower, in gloom profound,
 She cast him, where no ray of cheerful light
 From Phœbus e'er dispell'd the dismal night.
 Nor there with other food his hunger fed, 125
 But a short portion of unwholesome bread
 Putrid and foul! and oft withheld, to waste
 His life by slow degrees; and o'er him plac'd
 A keeper, who excell'd her barbarous zeal.
 To make him every human misery feel, 130

Had Amon's fair and valiant daughter heard,
 Or great Marphisa (both through earth rever'd
 For deeds of arms) that thus, with lingering pains,
 Rogero prisoner lay in galling chains,

To

To fet him free, how soon, without regard 135
Of death and danger, either had prepar'd ;
No more had Bradamant, to yield him aid,
Respect to Beatrice or Amon paid.

Meantime king Charles, revolving in his breast
His promise given at Bradamant's request, 140
That none in marriage should her hand obtain,
But he who could in arms her force sustain,
Not only at his court with trumpet's sound
Her challenge told, but through each region round
That own'd his sway he bade the list proclaim, 145
Till wide from realm to realm was spread the fame.
The terms were these, declar'd by herald's voice,
That who on Amon's daughter fix'd his choice,
Should first against her prove his single might
From rising Phœbus till his setting light : 150
And should he, unsubdu'd, so long withstand
The virgin's force, she by his stronger hand
Would own her prowess conquer'd, nor deny
Consent to knit with him the nuptial tie :
That, waving all pretensions, would she yield 155
To him the choice of weapons for the field.
Amon, who durst in such a cause no more
Oppose his sovereign, gave the contest o'er ;

And,

And, after various thoughts in vain revolv'd,
To lead his daughter to the court resolv'd. 160

Though deep resentment swell'd the mother's breast,
Nor in herself her anger she suppress'd
Against the dame; yet, for her honour's sake,
She caus'd fair robes, with sumptuous cost, to make
Of blended hues, and, as her rank requir'd, 165
With these the lovely Bradamant attir'd;
Who to the palace with her sire return'd,
Where soon, alas! her absent knight she mourn'd.

As one in April fair, or genial May,
Who leaves with blossom'd sweets the garden gay, 170
Again returning, when the solar rays
Decline more south, and shorter leave the days,
Thinks all a wild; so seem'd the court no more
To her that splendid court it look'd before.
She dares not ask, lest question might reveal 175
What in her heart she labours to conceal;
Yet listens oft, and hopes some tongue may tell
(Unask'd of her) what chance the knight besel.
All knew he left the court; but none divin'd
What course he took, or what his thoughts design'd:
Departing thence, he to his squire alone, 181
His faithful follower, made his purpose known.

Ah ! how she sigh'd ! ah ! how with sudden dread
Her heart was seiz'd, to hear her lover fled ;
Ah ! how she fear'd, lest he in absence fought 185
By slow degrees to drive her from his thought !
That finding thus their loves by Amon cross'd,
And every hope to be her comfort lost,
He shunn'd her sight, by distance to remove
The cruel pangs of unavailing love ; 190
Perchance from realm to realm to seek a dame,
Whose merits might expunge his former flame.
A new reflection then succeeds, and shows
Rogero ever constant to his vows :
Herself she blames, that could his faith distrust 195
With weak surmises, and with fears unjust.
Now she accuses, now her knight defends ;
Now sinks the scale of hope, and now ascends.
She mourns, as for some crime, that e'er her mind,
To groundless fears and jealousies resign'd, 200
Should doubt his truth — then beats her breast and cries,
As if she present her Rogero spies.

Forgive me—I have err'd—but ah ! the cause,
Through which I err, to deeper error draws
My hapless soul—the cause is love, whose dart 205
Has trac'd thy dearest image in my heart :

There

There lives thy courage, there each grace inshrined,
Th' acknowledg'd praise, the theme of all mankind !
It cannot be, but every maid or dame
Who views thy charms, must feel the gentle flame, 210
And every art employ, by woman known,
To loose my ties, and bind thee with her own :
Yet had but love thy thoughts as justly trac'd
Within my heart, as there thy form is plac'd,
Full sure I then thy secret thoughts might view, 215
What now I deem them, ever kind and true ;
Then every anxious doubt and scruple o'er,
My heart should throb with jealous pangs no more.
As when the miser, from his hoarded gold
Afar disjoin'd, in thought must still behold 220
His dearer part, and fees with fancy's eyes
Some envious thief purloin the glittering prize :
So, my Rogero, when I cease to hear
Thy voice, to view thy face, a chilling fear
All hope destroys—I know my fears untrue, 225
But cannot, as I would, those fears subdue.
Turn, my Rogero, turn—that peace restore,
Which grief has nearly kill'd, to exist no more,
As, when the setting sun forsakes the skies,
With shades increas'd increasing terrors rise ; 230
Soon

Soon as his beams return, the shades decrease,
And with the lessening shades our terrors cease :
Rogero absent, every hope is crost,
Rogero present, every fear is lost !
Turn, my Rogero, turn, ere fears destroy 235
Each little hope, and poison future joy !
As sparks by night diffuse a gleamy ray,
That sudden fades at near approach of day :
So when my sun withdraws his parting light,
My grief is strengthen'd with the mental night ; 240
But when again in eastern state he burns,
My sorrows vanish, and my joy returns !
Come then, my dearest light ! whose beams control
The fable terrors that surround my soul.
When the low sun brings on the shortening days, 245
The earth no more her wonted charms displays ;
The hollow winds are clogg'd with ice and snow,
No birds are heard, no blossom'd odours blow :
So thou, my life's dear sun, whose rays impart
The genial warmth to cheer my drooping heart, 250
When thou art gone, what cares my soul infect !
What more than winter desolates my breast !
Return, my cheering sun, and with thee bring
The smiling treasures of the blooming spring ;

So shall my soul thy healing influence prove — 255
 O ! chace my winter, and my clouds remove !

As Progne or as Philomela mourns,
 That to her helpless young with food returns,
 And finds the nest by cruel hinds despoil'd :
 As wails the turtle, of her mate beguil'd : 260
 So Bradamant laments her absent knight,
 As torn for ever from her longing sight :
 Adown her cheek the trickling sorrows steal,
 While yet she strives her anguish to conceal.
 How had her grief to grief unequall'd grown, 265
 Could she have heard (to her, alas ! unknown)
 That, kept in torment, her unhappy lord
 Lay prisoner, sentenc'd to a death abhorr'd !

The dreadful sufferings, and the lingering pains,
 Of that good knight who groan'd in hostile chains, 270
 (His fate by that relentless dame design'd
 With tortures keen of unexampled kind)
 All-gracious Heaven (by suffering virtue won)
 Brought to the ear of Cæsar's courteous son,
 And his great soul inspir'd with means to save 275
 The peerless hero from a cruel grave.

The noble Leon, who Rogero lov'd,
 (His name unknown) by that high valour mov'd

Which,

Which, first on earth, the wondering prince esteem'd
 Above a man's, and more than mortal deem'd; 280
 Long counsell'd with himself, in close debate;
 At length devis'd such means to elude his fate,
 That Theodora never should complain
 Her wish'd revenge by him was render'd vain.
 Apart to him he spoke, with whom remain'd 285
 The prison's charge, whose walls the knight detain'd,
 And told his purpose, ere the doom severe
 Was finish'd, with the prisoner to confer.

'Twas night : he chose companion of his way
 A friend, well try'd at every hard essay : 290
 Then to the captain of the tower he came,
 And instant gain'd access with Leon's name.
 The keeper, for the visit well prepar'd,
 Suspecting nought, without his wonted guard,
 Led Leon and his friend where lay confin'd 295
 The knight to death's severest pangs assign'd.
 Now, near the place arriv'd, the wary two
 Pursu'd, and as the keeper stooping drew
 A portal's bar, around his neck they cast
 The fatal noose—he gasp'd, and breath'd his last. 300
 A door they rais'd, and by a ladder plac'd
 For such intent, the prince, with friendly haste

Descending,

Descending, went to where Rogero lay,
Excluded from the beams of cheerful day.
A lighted torch he held, by which he found, 305
Stretch'd on an iron grate, the champion bound,
Where, not a palm beneath his dreadful bed,
With putrid damps a stagnant water spread :
Without the hangman, ax, or cord, or knife,
The place had soon cut short his wretched life. 310
Leon, dissolv'd in pity, to his breast
Rogero closely held, and thus address'd.
Sir knight ! thy virtues o'er my willing mind
Full empire hold, and to thy service bind
My future life—thy good o'er mine I prize ; 315
And for thy safety I my own despise.
My friendship stands avow'd—thy love I place
Above my fire, my kindred, all my race.
Then hear me—Leon am I call'd, the son
Of Constantine, to thy assistance won : 320
In person view me here, my love to show,
With danger, should my fire my purpose know,
To live an exile from his regal seat,
Or in his court his frowns eternal meet :
For thee he hates, by whom on yonder plain 325
His bands were near Belgrado chac'd or slain.

He

He said; and while he thus discourse pursu'd,
Whose gentle cordial ebbing life renew'd,
His pious hands each straiten'd band unty'd:
What thanks to thee I owe! (Rogero cry'd)— 330
This being, fav'd by thee, no more is mine,
This to my dear deliverer I resign;
Whene'er, O prince! shall Heaven my prayers attend,
For thee my sword to use, my life to spend.

Rogero thus; and from the dungeon fled, 335
Where in his place remain'd the keeper dead.
Himself unknown, unknown with him the two:
Good Leon to his home Rogero drew,
And there, in friendly guise, some days detain'd,
With promise, while in safety he remain'd, 340
His arms and generous courser to restore,
Though then with-held in stern Unguardo's power.
The prison open'd, and the prisoner's flight,
And keeper kill'd, were known by morning light.
This way and that was sway'd the hearers' mind, 345
Each heard the tale, but none the truth divin'd.
None through the world had Leon e'er believ'd
The friend from whom Rogero aid receiv'd;
That Leon who, they deem'd, with hate pursu'd
The knight, nor fought his safety but his blood. 350

Meanwhile the matchless courtesy impress'd
Such grateful wonder in Rogero's breast,
Repentant now his former thoughts he view'd;
Far other thoughts the soften'd knight pursu'd :
The first by hatred, gall, and venom fir'd ; 355
The last by love and love-born peace inspir'd.
At morn, at night, he ponder'd in his mind,
(No other cares could there admittance find)
How with like courtesy, or more, to pay
The grateful debt that on his honour lay : 360
To him it seem'd, whate'er his life's extent,
For such a friend should all his days be spent ;
A thousand times death ventur'd for his sake
Would scarce, he deem'd, a just requital make. 364

At length from France the king's decree was known,
Which wide around the herald's trump had blown,
That he whose hand would Bradamant obtain,
Must with his sword and shield her force sustain.
Such little joy this news in Leon bred,
That from his cheek the doubtful colour fled : 370
For well he knew, by many a proof display'd,
His arm too weak to meet the Dordan maid.
Now with himself he seem'd the means to spy,
By art his want of vigour to supply ;

If

If cloth'd like him, this warlike youth conceal'd, 375

He sent his proxy to the lifted field;

Whose force and courage well he deem'd might stand
Against the best of Gallia's martial band.

But first it rested to dispose the knight

To enter for his sake the field of fight; 380

Then, in his stead, from all disguis'd, to place,

In Grecian garb array'd, the dame to face.

Now to his friend the secret of his breast

He told, and urg'd with prayers the dear request,

Him, for his sake, beneath a borrow'd name 385

Attir'd, to meet in arms the martial dame.

Much could the Grecian's eloquence, but more

Than all his eloquence, the sacred power

Of gratitude, that singly could control

The tenderest feelings of Rogero's soul: 390

While his heart shudder'd at the suit, he try'd

With outward smiles his inward pangs to hide;

And answer'd, that he stood prepar'd to prove

All hazards due to noble Leon's love.

Yet scarce his lips had given these accents breath, 395

When at his heart he felt a stroke like death.

By day, by night, the youth more wretched grew;

By day, by night, nor peace nor rest he knew:

He saw too well his future doom was seal'd,
But, never wish'd his promis'd word repeal'd: 400

A thousand deaths he rather chose to die,
Than e'er a suit, by Leon urg'd, deny.
His death is fix'd: if Bradamant he leaves,
He leaves his life; her loss his soul bereaves
Of every bliss—but should his inward grief 405

Too feeble prove to work its own relief,
Himself can free, with predetermin'd hand,
His tortur'd spirit from its fleshly band:
Prepar'd for all, far rather than behold
Another's arms his plighted bride enfold. 410

Though resolute to die, his mind as yet
Uncertain wavers how his fate to meet;
Sometimes he thinks his skill in arms to hide,
And to the dame expose his naked side:
For how so happy could he sink in death, 415

As by her hand to yield his parting breath!
But soon reflection whisper'd to his thought,
Not so must Leon's friendship be forgot:
His word was given in this unwonted strife,
To win for him fair Bradamant to wife; 420

Not with feign'd show of fruitless arms deceive,
And Leon of his promis'd aid bereave.

*

Thus

Thus still unstain'd his candid faith he held;
And while his thoughts now here, now there rebell'd,
He turn'd from all; save those that would persuade
His heart to keep the vow his friendship made. 426

Now Leon from his father Constantine
Had leave obtain'd to forward his design,
With arms and courfers, and a numerous guard,
And all that suited for his rank prepar'd. 430
His march begun; with him Rogero rode,
Who now his arms restor'd, and courser, ow'd
To Leon's care—day following day they pass'd,
Till entering France, they Paris reach'd at last.
Here Leon stay'd without the city's gate, 435
Then pitch'd beneath the walls in regal state
His lofty tent, and one dispatch'd to bear
His princely greeting to the monarch's ear.

Full glad was Charles, and well his friendship show'd
By visits paid, and costly gifts bestow'd. 440
His cause of coming then the prince disclos'd,
And pray'd to what the herald's voice propos'd
A speedy issue, that the dame who chose
A lord who singly could her strength oppose,
The list would enter; since by her in arms 445
He came to die, or win her virgin charms.

Thus he; and Charles for Bradamant declar'd,
That she th' ensuing morn, in steel prepar'd,
Would pass the gates, and in the list (by night
Beneath the bulwarks form'd) await the fight. 450

How, from the setting sun to rising day,
Did sad Rogero groan the hours away!
So waits a wretch condemn'd the break of morn,
The light that must to him no more return!
All arm'd he chose to enter in the field, 455
To keep from each his looks, his mien conceal'd:
No steed he rode, nor pointed spear would shake,
Nor, save his sword, would arms offensive take:
The fight with spear he now resolv'd to shun;
He fear'd Frontino in the tilt to run: 460
Him had the damsel seen, full well he knew,
Her heedful eyes might at a single view
That courser call to mind, which oft she rein'd,
Which long at Mount Albano she detain'd.
Rogero thus, whose every thought and care 465
Would keep his person secret from the fair,
Nor took his steed, nor aught that might reveal,
By tokens, what he labour'd to conceal.
Another sword he for the combat chose:
He knew with Balifarda's lightest blows 470
Nor

Nor helm, nor shield, nor cuirafs could avail,
 Nor strongly-temper'd plate, nor twist'd mail:
 And ere the falchion by his side he plac'd,
 Its point he blunted, and its edge defac'd.
 To seem like Leon, o'er his arms he wore 475
 The regal scarf, by Leon worn before;
 The golden eagle, with his double head,
 He bore emblazon'd on a field of red.
 Th' exchange complete, one issu'd to the field,
 While one within the tent remain'd conceal'd. 480

Thus arm'd amid the lists Rogero stood,
 When with the dawn the bright horizon glow'd.
 From his far different was the virgin's will:
 Rogero, all in fear her blood to spill,
 Rebates his weapon's edge: the haughty maid, 485
 Eager with his to bathe her beamy blade,
 Adds sharpness to the steel; and hopes to view,
 Thro' sever'd plates, the wound each stroke pursue;
 With point or edge to reach the vital part,
 And drive the falchion to her suitor's heart. 490
 As the bold courser, nerv'd for rapid pace,
 Impatient waits the signal for the race;
 Now here, now there, he shifts his feet by turns,
 He pricks his ears, each smoking nostril burns:

So the fierce dame, who little thought the knight 495
Her dear Rogero, thus prepar'd for fight,
The trumpet waiting, seem'd thro' all her frame
To swell with ardour, and to glow with flame,
As often to the thunder's dreadful found
Dire winds succeed, and from the dark profound 500
Upturn the waves ; or from the desert land
In thickening volumes lift the heapy sand :
Wild beasts and swains with flocks affrighted fly ;
Black hail and rain come rattling from the sky :
So seem'd the virgin when the trumpet blew, 505
So, with drawn sword, against Rogero flew.
Not less some ancient oak, or stone-built tower
Of deep foundation, yields to Boreas' power ;
Not less some solid rock's resisting height
To angry billows, dash'd by day and night ; 510
Than good Rogero (in his fated arms
Which Hector wore, secur'd by Vulcan's charms)
Yields to the tempest, that with rage address,
Pours on his bosom, side, his shield and crest.
Now at full length the maid her weapon drove ; 515
Now endlong thrust, while all intent she strove
Between the jointed plates immers'd, to view
Her lover's blood the smoking steel imbrue.

Before,

Before, behind, now shifting side to side,
Oft wheeling round her furious strokes she ply'd; 520
And inward rav'd, oppress'd with high disdain,
To find that every stroke was aim'd in vain.
As one, that to some town strong siege applies,
Whose circling walls in solid bulwarks rise,
Oft gives th' assault; now seeks the gates to break,
Now fill the fosse, and now the ramparts shake: 526
He sees his falling ranks with slaughter thin,
Yet vainly hopes his entrance soon to win:
So toil'd the dame—but nothing could avail
Her wonted force to shatter plate or mail. 530
Now from his cuirass, now his helmet high,
Now from his shield she makes the sparkles fly:
Thick and more thick, as on the rustic shed
The pattering hail, her rapid blows she sped,
Rogero stood collected, to attend 535
With skill his safety, nor the maid offend.
He lifts his shield, and parries with his steel
The strokes he sees the adverse weapon deal:
Seldom he strikes, or strikes with fondest care,
In doubt to hurt the lov'd, but cruel fair. 540
Meanwhile the virgin raves, as fading light
The sky forsaking, warn'd to end the fight.

And

And now she call'd to mind the terms propos'd,
Her danger pressing as the evening clos'd ;
For should she fail in one day's course to slay, 545
Or take her fuitor, she becomes his prey.
Now where the flood Alcides' pillars laves,
Phœbus prepar'd to plunge beneath the waves
His golden head, when first a doubt prevail'd
Of her own strength, and hope of conquest fail'd. 550
As sunk her hope, the more her fury grew,
And thick and heavier round the weapon flew
To break that armour which, essay'd in vain,
Could all the day her force unhurt sustain.
As one, who to some task his hand applies, 555
And sees the night th' unfinish'd work surprize,
In vain with double toil would time retrieve,
Till strength and day-light lost his views deceive.
O wretched damsel ! wert thou given to know
The knight at whom thou aim'st the mortal blow ; 560
Far rather would'st thou die than see his death,
On whose dear life depends thy fleeting breath ;
And, should thy own Rogero stand avow'd,
How would'st thou mourn each stroke thy arm be-
flow'd !

King

King Charles, and all th' assembled peers, who
thought 565

That Leon thus, and not Rogero, fought,
Beholding how so match'd in equal field
He stood with Bradamant his arms to wield;
How with such skill he could himself defend,
And yet the safety of the dame attend, 570
With wonder gaz'd—while breath'd from breast to
breast,

Each to his fellow thus his thoughts express'd:
“ Sure Heaven has aptly form'd this noble pair;
“ She merits well the knight, and he the fair !”

When Phœbus in the seas had quench'd his light,
Imperial Charles commands to stay the fight; 576
And dooms the maid no more delay to make,
But for her spouse victorious Leon take.

Rogero would not here his helm unlace,
Nor from his limbs the weighty mail unbrace; 580
But on a palfry mounting, swiftly went
Where Leon waited in the regal tent:
His arms around the warrior Leon threw,
And like a brother to his bosom grew;
Then swift his helmet rais'd, his face reveal'd, 585
And with a cordial kiss each cheek he seal'd.

My

My all is yours !—dispose of all (he cry'd)
Partake my treasures, and my power divide :
Ne'er shall I rest till some return I make,
For friendship thus display'd for Leon's sake. 590
Yet what return !—how shall I e'er repay
The boundless gift of this auspicious day ?
Not though the crown of our imperial race
I take from mine, and on thy temples place.

Thus he : Rogero, who in anguish burn'd, 595
Who loath'd his being, no reply return'd ;
But to the prince restor'd his vest and shield,
So late his ensigns in the glorious field :
His unicorn he took ; and now, as prest
With heavy toil, and feigning want of rest, 600
He thence withdrew, and soon his tent regain'd ;
Where, when the night in middle silence reign'd,
Unseen of all, his limbs in arms he cas'd,
And on his generous steed the trappings plac'd ;
Then press'd the feat, resolv'd alone to stray, 605
And his Frontino left to choose the way.

Frontino now direct, now devious past,
Now through the champaign, now the woodland waste,
And all the remnant night his lord he bore,
Who ceas'd not once his fortune to deplore : 610

On

On death he call'd ; from death invok'd relief,
To heal the anguish of a lover's grief:
Death, and death only, could a period give
For woes too exquisite to bear and live !

Of whom, alas ! (he cry'd) shall I complain, 615
For all the sufferings that I now sustain ?

Ah ! would I now revenge the pangs I feel,
On whom, alas ! such vengeance shall I deal
But on myself ? to whom my fate I owe,
From whom alone my springs of sorrow flow ? 620

It fits that on myself my rage I turn,
Myself the wretched cause of all I mourn !
But how, when on my Bradamant is brought
An equal woe, can I support the thought ?
Though for myself I unreveng'd might groan, 625
Her pains that vengeance claim, deny'd my own.

Yes—I will die for thee—for thy dear sake
This willing life shall some atonement make :

I but regret such fate I fail'd to prove,
Ere I so far had injur'd her I love ! 630

Why dy'd I not, when, doom'd to cruel pains,
I lay in ruthless Theodora's chains ?

Then had I hop'd to find the pitying tear
Of Bradamant bedew Rogero's bier :

But

But when she knows that Leon's bliss I held 635
Above her own ; that, not by force compell'd,
To him I sacrific'd a lover's flame,
How will she, dead or living, loath my name !

While words like these his inward grief confess'd,
Sighs following sighs quick bursting from his breast,
Uprose the fun, when gazing round he spy'd 641
Thick dreary wilds perplex'd on every side.
Fix'd in despair, and resolute to die,
Remote from man, where not a human eye
Might view his fate ; this place appear'd design'd 645
To suit the dreadful purpose of his mind.
The wood he pierc'd, where deepest he survey'd
The meeting shade inwove with meeting shade ;
But first from reins and bit Frontino freed,
Releas'd, and thus address'd his gallant steed. 650

O my Frontino ! were it mine to give,
What worth like thine should from thy lord receive ;
Thou should'st not envy him who now obtains
A starry seat, on heaven's ethereal plains ;
O first, O noblest of thy generous race ! 655
For she, the pride of beauty, valour's grace,
Oft with her hand supply'd the foodful grain,
Thy trappings plac'd, and fix'd thy curbing rein.

Dear

Dear wert thou to my dame—but wherefore mine !

My dame no more !—that title I resign !— 666

I yield her to another—trusty sword !

Now turn thy point against thy faithless lord.

While thus Rogero through the desert grove

Can birds and beasts to share his sorrows move,

For these alone his mournful plaints attend, 665

As down his breast the frequent tears descend ;

Think not his faithful Bradamant remains

In Paris free from love's heart-rending pains :

No vain excuses more, no feign'd delay

With Leon can elude the nuptial day. 670

What would she do for her Rogero's sake

Ere yield consent another lord to take ?

Break every tie, the king, the court oppose,

Make parents, friends, and all the world her foes :

Should nothing yet avail, at least might death, 675

With sword or poison, end her hated breath ;

And better far she deem'd to live no more,

Than living her Rogero's loss deplore.

Ah, my Rogero ! whither art thou fled ?

Art thou so far remote (the mourner said) 680

That ne'er to thee our challenge stood reveal'd,

From thee alone, of all mankind, conceal'd ?

O ! could the news have reach'd thy faithful ear,
 No speed like thine had met the summons here.
 Ah ! wretch—what other can my thoughts suggest, 685
 Than that which, but surmising, rives my breast !
 Why com'st thou not to make my joys run o'er—
 But, ah ! thou liv'st in bonds—or liv'st no more !
 Too surely Constantine's detested heir
 Has for thy life or freedom spread the snare ; 690
 By fraud thy timely coming to prevent,
 Lest thy return should frustrate his intent.
 From mighty Charles a sovereign grant I gain'd,
 A grant, which, save myself, had none obtain'd ;
 In firm belief thou only in the list 695
 Of single trial, couldst my arms resist :
 Thyself except—all others I defy'd——
 Lo ! Heaven has punish'd such o'erweening pride ;
 And he, who never yet in arms had run
 One glorious course, from me the palm has won. 700
 But am I vanquish'd, that I fail'd to take
 Proud Leon's life, or him my captive make ?
 Can this be just ?—were these the terms agreed ?
 Or this the doom by partial Charles decreed ?
 What once I proffer'd, if I now disclaim, 705
 I know inconstancy must brand my name :

But

But am I then the first or last to show
 That change must ever govern all below ?
 Yet call me lighter than the falling leaves
 Which autumn's plain from sapless boughs receives ;
 Let but my truth to him I love be prov'd, 711
 Firm as a rock, by surging tides unmov'd,
 Surpassing every praise of woman told,
 In modern story, or in times of old !

These words and more the sorrowing virgin spoke, 715
 While sighs incessant from her bosom broke :
 And all the live-long night in tears she lay,
 The night succeeding that ill-omen'd day.

By Heaven impell'd, at morn the fearless dame,
 Marphisa, to the sovereign presence came ; 720
 And said, her soul in secret had disdain'd
 The wrong Rogero in his wife sustain'd ;
 His was the bride—nor would a sister view
 Another's claim usurp her brother's due ;
 And proffer'd to maintain in single fight 725
 The hand of Bradamant Rogero's right ;
 But proffer'd chief, before the destin'd bride
 To prove the truth (if she such truth deny'd)
 That oft herself the solemn words had heard
 Of faith exchang'd, by all mankind rever'd ; 730

Given to Rogero by the virgin fair
With every form that binds th' affianc'd pair.

Thus she: and Charles was mov'd at what she said,
And bade the virgin to his fight be led.

To her the king Marphisa's words declar'd, 735

And Amon, present, in the converse shar'd;

While Bradamant with eyes cast downward stood,

Nor yet the truth deny'd, nor yet avow'd:

Yet seem'd her mien and modest blush to own

What thus Marphisa's friendly zeal made known. 740

Rinaldo much, and much Anglante's knight

Rejoic'd to hear Rogero's sacred right

So well maintain'd; the nuptials set aside,

And Leon baffled of his promis'd bride.

Rogero now must Bradamant espouse, 745

They deem, nor Amon more control their vows;

And she, deliver'd from her fire's command,

To young Rogero give her willing hand.

Impatient Amon then—A shallow wile

Is this, contriv'd a parent to beguile. 750

But were it thus, as you in fraud pretend,

Believe not here my fix'd resolves to bend.

For let us grant (what yet I still deny)

My daughter could, in some fond hour, comply

To

To give her hand in marriage to the youth, 755

And he to her had pledg'd his future truth ;

Say, when or where was this exchange of heart ?

The time, the place, each circumstance impart.

Such contract must have been (if e'er believ'd)

Before Rogero's soul our faith receiv'd. 760

But what imports a contract made before

Rogero had embrac'd the Christian lore ?

Such vows can never with our laws agree,

When he a Pagan, a Believer she.

For this has Leon risk'd his fame in vain 765

With Bradamant, on yon contested plain ?

And will our monarch, still for justice fam'd,

Reverse the sentence he so late proclaim'd ?

These pleas of vain delay that each would bring,

You should long since have urg'd, ere yet the king, 770

At her request, the martial challenge spread,

Which to the trial generous Leon led.

Thus Amon, who to part the lovers fought,

Against Rinaldo and Orlando brought

His specious charge—while Charles, to either side 775

Impartial, nor to this, nor that reply'd.

As when some wood the rising wind receives,

A murmuring noise is heard among the leaves :

Or Eolus his wrath on Neptune pours,
 The loud waves dash, and reflux beat the shores. 780
 The rumour thus of deep dissention bred
 Among the peers, through all the kingdom spread:
 On this alone each ear attentive hung;
 And this the theme of every eager tongue.
 Some with Rogero, some with Leon join'd; 785
 But most to good Rogero's cause inclin'd.
 For one that favour'd Amon, ten preferr'd
 The lover's claim: the emperor silent heard,
 Referr'd the just decision to the laws,
 And to the nation's council left the cause. 790

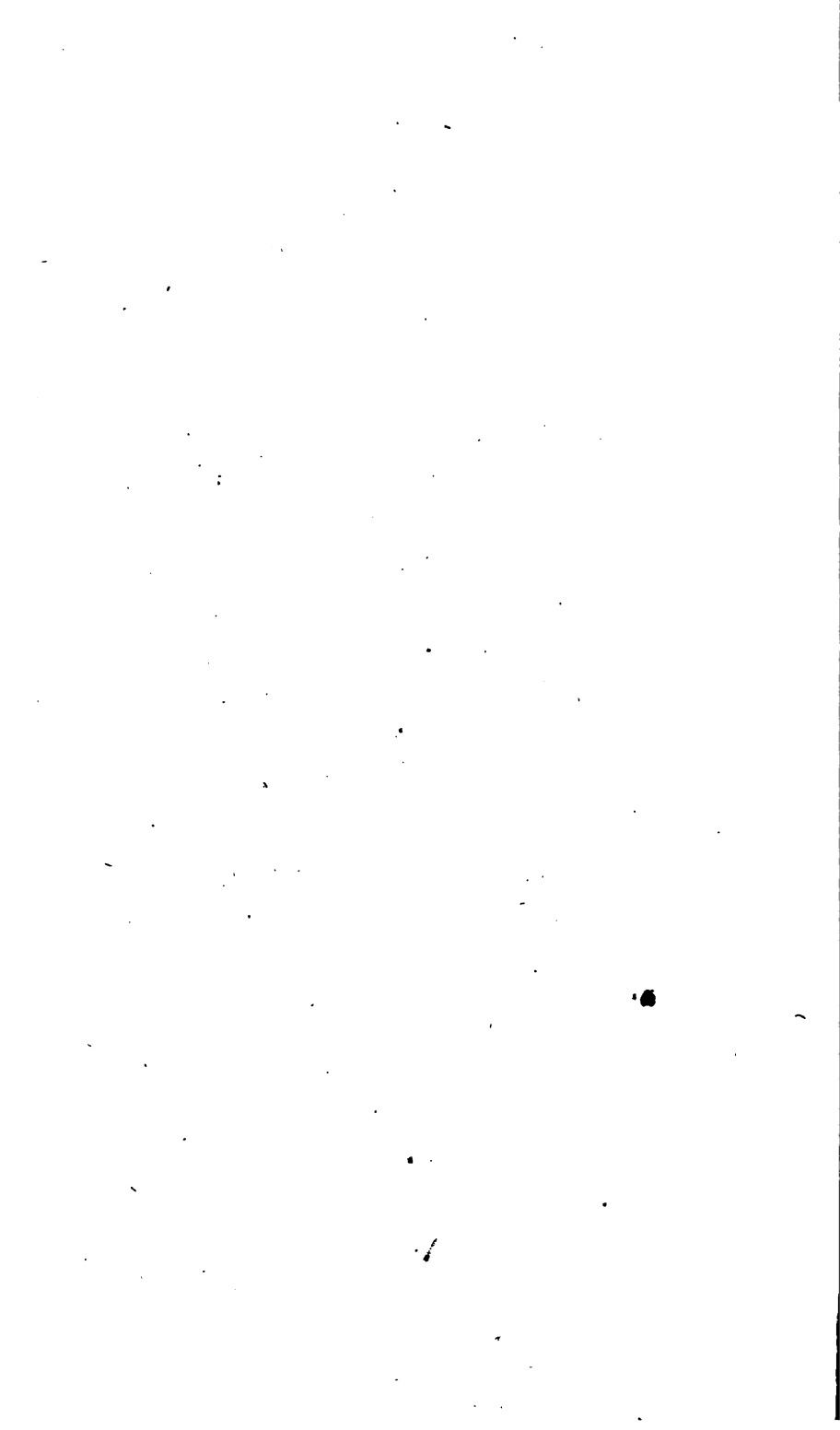
The nuptials now delay'd, Marphisa came,
 And new conditions thus began to frame.

Since, while my brother lives, none else (she cry'd)
 Can with his dame in wedlock's bands be ty'd,
 Let Leon (if he seeks the maid to wife) 795
 First meet Rogero's arm in single strife,
 And he, by whom his noble foe is slain,
 Without a rival shall his bliss obtain.

Marphisa said: the trial thus propos'd,
 Imperial Charles to Leon's ear disclos'd, 800
 Who, while he saw auxiliar at his side
 The champion of the unicorn abide,

Secure of conquest o'er Rogero stood,
 And every enterprize undaunted view'd.
 He heard unmoy'd Marphisa's challenge given ; 805
 But little dreamt that grief his friend had driven
 To savage wilds, abandon'd and forlorn ;
 And vainly long expected his return.
 One day, another came, nor yet appear'd
 The absent knight, nor tidings yet were heard. 810
 By proof too well assur'd, he knew his hand
 Could ne'er in combat with Rogero stand ;
 And hence alarm'd, he bent his anxious mind
 The warrior of the unicorn to find.
 Through cities, towns, and rustic wilds he sent, 815
 Afar and near his trusty envoys went :
 Nor this suffic'd, in person next he press'd
 His steed, and to the search himself address'd :
 He fought amidst th' unnumber'd Christian train ;
 But vain his search, enquiry all as vain. 820

END OF THE TWENTY-THIRD BOOK.



THE
TWENTY-FOURTH BOOK
OF
O R L A N D O.

THE ARGUMENT.

LEON goes in search of **Rogero**, and is met by **Meliffa**, who conducts him to the wood where **Rogero** had retired with a resolution to end his life. Meeting of the two friends. **Rogero** discovers himself to **Leon**. Generosity of **Leon**. **Rogero** returns with them to the court of **Charles**. His reception there. The Bulgarian ambassadors invite him to take possession of the throne of Bulgaria. **Amon** and **Beatrice** consent to give him **Bradamant** to wife, and the marriage is celebrated with great pomp. On the last day of the festival a knight appears before the assembly, and challenges **Rogero** to single combat. The knight proves to be **Rodomont**. **Rogero** accepts the challenge; and, after a dreadful battle, **Rodomont** is slain; with whose death the poem concludes.

THE
TWENTY-FOURTH BOOK
OF
ORLANDO.

BUT wife Meliffa, whose benign intent,
To Bradamant and her Rogero bent,
Had ever watch'd, with fond maternal care,
What good or ill befel the faithful pair ;
She, who in every wish and act conspir'd 5
To see that union which her soul desir'd,
Commanded now her spirits to and fro,
By magic art on her behests to go ;
And still as one went forth, another came
With tidings gather'd for his anxious dame. 10
By these she learnt that brave Rogero lay
In desert wilds, to pining grief a prey,
With dire resolve to abstain from all repast
Of strengthening food, and waste with cruel fast

His

His wretched life : but soon Melissa gave 15
Her pitying aid the love-lorn youth to save.
To seek the knight her dwelling she forsook,
And took, by chance, the path that Léon took :
The prince she met, who late had sent before
His envoys every region to explore ; 20
And now in person went with anxious mind
The champion of the unicorn to find.

If in your soul such courteous thoughts reside,
As sure your noble mien bespeaks (she cry'd)
Vouchsafe your aid and comfort to a knight, 25
First of this age in virtue as in might.
The bravest knight, that ever at his side
The sword has girt, or to his breast apply'd
The cuirass bright, that ever yet could wield
The beamy spear, or lift the fencing shield ; 30
The gentlest, comeliest youth the world has known
In ancient times, or boasted in our own ;
For one unheard-of act in friendship's cause,
Without some aid, to life's sad period draws.
Then deign, O prince ! to view his wretched state, 35
And prove if aught can yet avert his fate.

She ceas'd ; and Leon, who in thought divin'd
That this was he, the knight he wish'd to find,

Pursu'd,

Pursu'd, without delay, the path she led,
 To snatch so brave a warrior from the dead; 40
 And ere they far had pierc'd the desert way,
 They came, where next to death Rogero lay.

They found him weak and spent, so nearly past
 All human help, with three days cruel fast,
 That scarce was vigour left him from the plain 45
 To rear his bulk; but all his strength in vain
 Had prov'd his trembling members to sustain. }
 Out-stretch'd he lay, with armour cover'd o'er,
 His head the casque, his side the falchion bore;
 His pillow rude the famous targe he made, 50
 Whose field the snow-white unicorn display'd:
 He sigh'd—he rav'd—he call'd himself ingrate,
 That gave the bitterest dregs of cruel fate
 To her he lov'd; while tears his face o'erflow'd,
 While every look and frantic gesture show'd, 55
 His fix'd despair, and, lost to all beside,
 Nor Leon nor Melissa he descry'd;
 Nor, at their sight, his tears or plaints suppress'd,
 Nor stopt the sighs quick bursting from his breast.

Leon attentive stood his speech to hear, 60
 Then left his steed; and now advancing near,
 He found that love had pierc'd his bleeding heart,
 But knew not her whose beauty wing'd the dart:

For

For while Rogero's lips his sorrows show'd,
They nam'd not her from whom his sorrows flow'd. 65

Near and more near the prince advancing drew,
Till face to face he stood in open view;
Then with a brother's warmth the youth address'd,
Lay at his side, and clasp'd him to his breast.
With gentlest words that friendship could impart, 70

To soothe the anguish of a wounded heart,
Thus Leon spoke—Refuse not to disclose
The secret cause from which thy suffering flows:
Few are the pangs which human kind endure,
But knowledge of the wound may point the cure: 75

Tell me thy grief—while yet of life possést,
Ah! let us ne'er of hope our souls divest.
It grieves me sore, what touch'd thy woe or weal,
Thou should'st from me, thy truest friend, conceal:
Not only now by friendship firmly ty'd, 80

No time henceforth our union shall divide;
But from that moment, when thy victor-sword
Seem'd every cause of hatred to afford,
Thou still wert mine; and might'st from me receive
Whate'er my wealth, my friends, my power could give!
Decline not then to impart thy secret grief, 86
And leave a friend to work a friend's relief.

Should

Should all my help be fruitless to remove
 Thy foul's distress—the last sad refuge prove
 Of welcome death—but ah ! such thoughts refrain, 90
 Till every human aid is try'd in vain.

He said ; and with such friendly zeal address'd
 His soothing speech, and urg'd the dear request,
 That sad Rogero's heart, not fram'd of steel
 Or harden'd adamant, but made to feel 95
 Fair friendship's power, refus'd not to comply
 With what he deem'd discourteous to deny :
 Yet thrice he strove to speak, while on his tongue,
 With open lips, the faltering accents hung.

At length he spoke—When I, O prince ! proclaim
 (As soon I shall) my unexpected name, 101
 Trust me, thou wilt no more oppose my fate,
 But rather wish this object of thy hate
 A speedier death—In me Rogero view !
 Whose rage so lately could thy life pursue, 105
 Left Bradamant, obtain'd from me, should fill
 Thy happier arms ; well known that Amon's will
 Favour'd thy suit—but since man's erring kind
 Oft plans what Heaven has other far design'd,
 Thy matchless courtesy, O prince ! repress'd 110
 The vengeful purpose of my jealous breast.

Not

Not only former hatred I resign'd,
 But to thy welfare all my thoughts inclin'd.
 Thou pray'dst me (little conscious that thy prayer
 Rogero urg'd) to win the peerless fair— 115

To win for thee!—and, ah! thou might'st as well
 From this sad heart the vital flame expel:

Yet, ah! too sure the dear event has shown,
 If thy desires I priz'd beyond my own.

Lo! Bradamant is thine!—secure with her 120
 Thy happiness, which I to mine prefer:

But since to me she's lost—wilt thou deny
 My woes the only privilege to die?

What can this breast of wretched life deprive,
 If I the loss of Bradamant survive? 125

Yet more—thou canst not, while I live, address
 A lawful plea the virgin to possess:

Oft have our names been join'd in nuptial vows,
 Nor can she link with me a second spouse.

When Leon, in his friend, Rogero view'd, 130
 Awhile unmov'd in silent gaze he stood;

Fix'd as a sculptur'd form memorial stands,
 In some fair temple rais'd by pious hands.

He deem'd an act so courteous must excel
 Whate'er the past or present times can tell. 135

Then

Then thus—If on that memorable day
When to thy valiant arm my camp gave way,
Thy hated name to me had stood reveal'd,
(Thy name, Rogero, till this hour conceal'd)
Still had thy worth no less my favour won, 140
Than when I view'd thy deeds, thyself unknown:
The love I bear thee now, alike confess
Even then had banish'd hatred from my breast.
Rogero's name I loath'd before I knew
That to thyself this hated name was due. 145
Thus far I own—but think not what before
My hatred rais'd, can raise my hatred more.
For had I known (when doom'd to racking pains
I set thee free from Theodora's chains)
What since I know—my soul had still pursu'd, 150
As now, whate'er might work thy future good.
If from my hand such friendship couldst thou prove,
Not bound by sacred ties of grateful love;
Should I not now thy dearest wish pursue,
O! I were basest of th' ungrateful crew. 155
Self-robb'd of every bliss thy bosom ow'd
To Heaven and love—on me thou hast bestow'd
Th' invaluable gift—but, lo! to thee I give
Th' invaluable gift again, and bid thee live.

Happier

Happier in this, thy anguish to relieve, 160

Than from thy hand the virgin to receive.

No claim have I—to thee belongs her heart:

What though I love her for her high desert,

Should she another wed, my secret grief,

Not fix'd as thine, might find from time relief. 165

Ah! can I wish that death should loose the bands

That hold in nuptial league your plighted hands,

And give me, eas'd of every rival strife,

To take the virgin for my lawful wife?—

Not her alone—but all the world can give, 170

I here abjure——O let me cease to live,

Rather than men should say, one thought distress'd,

Through me, the peace of such a champion's breast!

Yet let me here thy doubts unkind reprove,

That thou, who like thy own my soul canst move, 175

Whose will is mine, shouldst sooner choose to die,

Than on my friendly zeal for help rely.

These words, from Leon's lips, at length subdu'd

Rogero's purpose, who no more pursu'd

His dire resolve—I yield, I yield! (he said) 180

Nor longer seek to mingle with the dead.

But what to thee is due, whose saving breath

Has twice redeem'd me from the stroke of death?

Then

Then costly wines, and meats of flavoured taste,
Melissa's care before Rogero plac'd, 185
And with kind words consol'd the gentle knight,
Whose fainting spirit stood prepar'd for flight.

Meantime Frontino, who the neighing heard
Of kindred courfers, from the woods appear'd;
Him Leon bade th' attending squires receive, 190
And rein'd and saddled to his master give,
Who, led by Leon, scarce, with trembling feet
And sinking knees, could mount his wonted feat.
So was that strength decay'd, that strength which late
Amidst an army scatter'd death like fate, 195
When deck'd with cuirass, helm, and shield unknown,
The Greeks by him beheld their camp o'erthrown.

Now from the wood these three their way pursue,
And soon an abbey's friendly walls they view,
Whose kind retreat receives each welcome guest: 200
That day, and two succeeding days, they rest,
Till, by the slumbering couch and genial board,
The champion of the unicorn restor'd
To pristine vigour, with th' enchantress-dame,
And Leon, to th' imperial city came. 205

Here chosen envoys were receiv'd but late,
On solemn business, from Bulgaria's state,

To find their prince, and thither sent to bring
 From royal Charles their new-elected king,
 That each to him might pay a subject's vows, 210
 And with the diadem enwreath his brows.

With these ambassadors the squire appear'd,
 From whom the tidings of his lord were heard ;
 How near Belgrado's walls Rogero fought,
 What deeds his valour for Bulgaria wrought, 215
 And how, in Novengrado's town betray'd,
 The youth by stern Unguardo was convey'd
 To Theodora's hands; when soon was spread
 The certain rumour of the keeper dead,
 The prison open'd, and the prisoner fled. 220
 But none by tidings or surmise could tell
 What fortune since the noble knight befel.

Now unobserv'd, with vestments not his own,
 Rogero enter'd Charles' imperial town
 Through private ways; and at the morning light 225
 With Leon came, before the emperor's sight.
 Rogero held, with double branching head,
 The golden eagle on a field of red ;
 And, as agreed, the Grecian habit wore,
 And all those arms which in the list he bore. 230
 With him, unarm'd, came Leon at his side,
 Array'd in costly robes with regal pride ;

And all around the prince was seen to wait

A train that well beseem'd his lofty state.

To Charles he bow'd, who from his sovereign feat 235

Already rose the noble pair to meet;

When Leon by the hand Rogero led,

On whom all eyes were fix'd, and thus he said.

Lo! here the knight, who late sustain'd the fray

From morning's early dawn till close of day : 240

If rightly he conceives your high decree,

He asks, O king! the meed of victory,

The virgin won—and comes from thee to take

That hand, which valour thus his own could make.

Though, from thy late disposal, none shall dare 245

Contend with him to wed the matchless fair ;

Yet say, if courage may deserve the dame,

What other knight can urge a nobler claim?

If his the prize, who holds her most above

Her lovely sex, what heart like his can love? 250

And here he stands, prepar'd in single fight,

With arms undaunted to defend his right.

Imperial Charles, and all his court, amaz'd,

When this they heard, awhile in silence gaz'd;

Each deem'd that Leon had the combat won, 255

Not this strange knight, who seem'd to all unknown.

Marphisa, who, with many a noble peer,
Stood silent by, scarce gave a patient ear
Till Leon ceas'd; but with disdain inflam'd,
Stept forth, and thus in hasty words exclaim'd. 260

Since absent hence, Rogero is deny'd
To assert his title to the plighted bride,
Left, wanting friends to yield a generous aid,
Another undisputed should invade
His sacred rights—lo! I, his sister, dare 265
The boldest he, who rashly shall declare
For Bradamant a lover's boasted name,
Or vie presumptuous with Rogero's claim.

Sternly she spoke; and from her eyes appear'd
Such fiery glances, that th' assistants fear'd, 270
Left, not awaiting lifts by Charles prepar'd,
Her hand had then some deed of vengeance dar'd.

Leon no more Rogero now conceal'd,
But, lifting up his helm, his face reveal'd;
Then to Marphisa turn'd—Behold (he cry'd) 275
Himself appears the contest to decide!

As old Ægeus gaz'd, with ghastly hue,
When at the direful board his son he knew,
To whom he, by his impious wife impell'd,
In ruthless ire the deadly poison held; 280

Who,

Who, had not then the monarch's eyes descry'd
 The fatal sword, had by his father died :
 So look'd Marphisa, when, by Leon shown,
 She found Rogero in the knight unknown :
 Sudden around his much-lov'd neck she clung 285
 With eager grasp, and at his bosom hung.
 Orlando then, Rinaldo then express'd
 Their love ; but first imperial Charles address'd
 The noble youth : not Olivero bold,
 Not gallant Dudon, nor Sobrino old, 290
 Could from his wish'd embrace their arms withhold.
 Knights, barons, Paladins, alike enjoy'd
 The happy change, that every thought employ'd.

Leon, whose lips in speaking could excel,
 At length, these greetings done, began to tell 295
 Before the king and nobles of the state,
 (Who stood to hear the prince his tale relate)
 What brave Rogero's matchless force in arms,
 Had prov'd to his and to his people's harms ;
 That, when to torture doom'd by her whose hands 300
 Detain'd him prisoner in unfeeling bands,
 The grateful warrior from his prison freed,
 Repaid the service with a generous deed,
 That past nor future ages could exceed.

He told, how inly stung with deep despair, 305
When for his friend he won the martial fair,
The knight resolv'd to die, and verg'd on death,
Till timely aid prolong'd his fleeting breath :
And in such moving phrase the tale he dress'd,
That not an eye the feeling tear suppress'd. 310

He ended here; and then persuasive woo'd
Relentless Amon, till his words subdu'd
Tenacious age; nor only from his thought
Drove his first purpose, but so far he wrought,
Amon refus'd not at Rogero's hand 315
To plead excuse, and urge the nuptial band ;
Beseeching now the youth to crown his vows,
To accept in him his fire, in Bradamant his spouse.

Soon to the virgin, where retir'd she fate,
And mourn'd the turns of her disastrous fate, 320
With gladsome accents many a tongue convey'd
The happy news, which when the love-sick maid
At first receiv'd, the blood around her heart
By grief collect'd, from that vital part
So sudden flew, as near with joy had left 325
Her chilly frame of life itself bereft :
All trembling and unnerv'd her feet in vain,
With strength exhausted, would her weight sustain.

Not

Not greater joy the wretch condemn'd can feel,
 When sentenc'd, by the gibbet, axe, or wheel, 330
 To shameful death; or when the hangman's hand
 Has folded o'er his sight the fatal band;
 If chance his ears th' unhop'd-for sound receive
 Of that blest voice which brings his life's reprieve.

With transport Clarmont and Mograna view'd 335
 Between each house what union fair ensu'd:
 Th' ambassadors, that from Bulgaria sent,
 To Charles' high court to seek Rogero went,
 In hopes that valiant knight, their king design'd,
 The champion of the unicorn to find; 340
 When him they met, they blest'd the happy hour
 That to their wish could him they sought restore,
 Their chief belov'd! and him on bending knee
 Implor'd with them Bulgaria's realms to see,
 And visit Adrianople's regal town, 345
 That kept for him the sceptre and the crown.
 Their hopes on him they plac'd, with conquering arms
 To guard their threaten'd state in new alarms:
 For Constantine in person, with a force
 More numerous, thither bent his threaten'd course:
 But with their king Rogero's presence blest, 351
 They hop'd from Greece th' imperial sway to wrest.

Won by their gratitude and loyal prayer,
Rogero gave consent the crown to wear;
And vow'd, if nought his purpose should withstand,
In three short months to reach Bulgaria's land. 356
Leon Augustus, at the converse nigh,
Here bade Rogero on a prince rely;
That since his hand Bulgaria's sceptre sway'd,
With them and Constantine the peace was made; 360
And pledg'd his honour (in a father's name)
Of every conquest to renounce the claim.

No virtue that Rogero's soul possess'd
Could move so far th' ambitious mother's breast,
Or to her love her promis'd son endear, 365
As join'd with his the name of king to hear.

The rites were solemniz'd with regal pride,
Befitting Charles, whose care the pomp supply'd;
And every honour on the maid bestow'd,
As if to him a daughter's name she ow'd; 370
Such was the virgin's worth (nor need we join
To hers the worth of all her noble line)
The generous prince had scarcely deem'd it lost,
Though half his realm were wasted in the cost.
He bade, by sound of trumpet, wide proclaim 375
An open court, where each unquesti'd came;

And

And granted, till the ninth revolving day,
Free lifts for all to meet in martial play.
Amid the plain he rear'd delightful bowers
Of twining branches, wreath'd with odorous flowers,
Where filk and gold display'd such blended light, 381
No eye had e'er beheld so fair a sight:
For not the walls of Paris could contain,
From various nations, such a countless train.
There rich and poor; there all degrees on earth, 385
Of Grecian, Latian, and Barbarian birth,
Throughout the world; that tongue can scarce relate
The lords and envoys sent from every state;
All lodg'd at ease, in various shelters spread,
From rich pavilions, to the humble shed. 390

The night before, the sage divining dame
Had bent her care the nuptial couch to frame,
And nuptial tent, for that great day design'd,
That day for ever present to her mind.
This work of skill on Thracia's distant shore 395
From Constantine the wise enchantress bore,
With Leon's fair consent—but more to raise
The prince's wonder, and the court's amaze;
To show her matchless power, that could retain
Th' infernal dragon in her curbing chain; 400
Of

Of him, as suited her designs, dispose,
And all the band of God's rebellious foes ;
This rich pavilion at the noon of day,
From Constantine, who held imperial sway,
Through air she brought, and in the field she spread
A sumptuous lodgment for Rogero's bed. 406
The feast complete, again the nuptial tent
To Constantine by miracle she sent.

Two thousand years had circled since a dame,
Of Ilion's race, employ'd her hand to frame 410
The wondrous work : her Heaven-instructed mind
Here great events of future days design'd.
Cassandra was her name : this tent she gave
Her brother Hector, bravest of the brave :
This, Hector, as her gift, rejoic'd to take, 415
For the gift's value, and the giver's sake,
And priz'd till death : but when, by treason slain,
He fell, and Greeks subdu'd the Trojan train ;
When Sinon to his friends the gates unbarr'd,
And worse ensu'd than words have yet declar'd ; 420
This tent by lot was Menelaüs' share :
This tent he chanc'd to Egypt's realm to bear,
There for his wife, of whom he stood bereft
By Proteus' hand, with him the gift he left ;

Then

Then to the Ptolemies in due descent 425

It fell; and next to Cleopatra went;

Till in the seas of dread Leucadia lost,

It swell'd the plunder of Agrippa's host;

And by Augustus and Tiberius gain'd,

Preserv'd at Rome till Constantine remain'd: 430

When Constantine remov'd from Tyber's shore,

The precious tent he to Byzantium bore.

Rich cords of gold the fair pavilion strain'd,

An ivory pole the canopy sustain'd:

There comelier forms embroider'd rose to view, 435

Than e'er Apelles' wondrous pencil drew.

There gaily clad in shining robes are seen

The Graces three, ministrant to a queen

In matron-throes, of whom a child is born

To bless his age, and all mankind adorn. 440

See near him Jove and speech-fam'd Hermes stand,

And Mars and Venus: with unsparing hand

Each sheds the tribute of ethereal flowers,

And roseate unguents in celestial showers!

The infant swathes in letter'd gold proclaim 445

Hippolito—a future glorious name!

The figur'd work a foreign train express'd,

With length of hair and long descending vest;

These

These envoys from Corvino to require
The growing infant of his tender fire. 450
Soon in the Vatican behold him plac'd
A stripling cardinal—while prudence, grac'd
With soft persuasion, from his lip distils,
And with surprise the hallow'd conclave fills.
Lo! there are games and sports depicted view'd, 455
The pastimes by th' illustrious youth pursu'd;
Who now on Alpine heights the woodland bears,
And now wild boars in fen and valley dares:
Borne on a courser that outstrips the wind,
He holds in chace the goat or fleeter hind. 460
Behold him there amid the learned band
Of sage philosophers and poets stand:
One sets to view the planetary tribes,
While one the heavens, and one the earth describes.
These mournful elegy or joyous verse, 465
Those epic strains or sprightly odes rehearse.
Music he hears in dulcet notes, that roll
To lull the passions, or to fire the soul!
In other parts, with shining arms array'd,
He flies to give the threaten'd church his aid: 470
Alone his presence can suffice to cheer
The holy brethren, and relieve their fear;

And

And he whose hand so soon the flame repell'd,
May justly boast—I came—I saw—and quell'd!

The knights and dames beheld with eyes intent, 475
But knew not what the mystic figures meant;
Yet all with pleasure gaz'd, their sight amus'd
With each fair form, and all the scrolls perus'd.

What verse the courteous praises can report
Of royal Charles, and all his splendid court? 480
Pleasures still new the festive hours afford,
And plenteous viands crown the smiling board.
Each hardy knight his hardy deeds essays,
Each day a thousand shiver'd spears displays;
By foot, by horse, are various battles wag'd, 485
Some pair'd, and some in mingled rout engag'd.
But o'er the rest Rogero bears the fame,
And wins the palm from every rival name;
In wrestling and the dance, in every kind
Of youthful feats he leaves his peers behind. 490

The last great day, ere games and tilting ceas'd,
The nobles seated at the solemn feast,
Where Charles upon his left Rogero plac'd,
And lovely Bradamant his right hand grac'd;
Lo! pacing o'er the plain, appear'd in view 495
A knight all arm'd, that near th' assembly drew;
Himself,

Himself, his steed, with sable cover'd o'er,
His stature large, and semblance proud he bore :
This knight was Sarza's king, who smit with shame
What time the virgin at the bridge o'ercame 500
His boasted might, had sworn thenceforth to quit
His sword and arms, nor rein the foamy bit ;
But like a hermit, in some lonely cell,
A year, a month, and day in penance dwell.
So punish'd on himself each ancient knight 505
His honour tarnish'd by successful fight.
Though yet of Charles he heard loud fame relate,
And what his sovereign lord's unhappy fate ;
True to his oath, no more his sword he drew,
Than if nor Charles nor Agramant he knew. 510
But when at length, complete the time requir'd,
He saw the year, the month, and day expir'd,
With other armour, steed, and sword and lance,
He reach'd with eager speed the court of France.

His courser's seat he kept unmov'd, nor bow'd 515
His haughty head, nor sign of reverence show'd ;
As if he scorn'd king Charles and all the state
Of those high peers that there assembled fate.
Each one his wonder in his looks express'd,
To see this bold, this self-intruding guest ; 520
And

And all forgot their food and talk, intent
 To hear the knight, and what his coming meant.
 When now full opposite to Charles he stood,
 Where by his side the noble youth he view'd
 With fiery glance ; the silence first he broke, 525
 And thus aloud in threatening accents spoke.

The prince of Sarza, Rodomont am I,
 And thee Rogero to the list defy !
 And ere the night extends her raven wing,
 Will prove thee here disloyal to thy king : 530
 That thou, whose name a traitor's deeds disgrace,
 Deserv'st not 'midst these peers an honour'd place :
 Though well to all thy falsehood must be known,
 Nor thou, a Christian, canst the charge disown :
 And now, to fix on thee a traitor's stain, 535
 I come to call thee to th' embattled plain :
 Or, is there one will offer, for thy sake,
 To meet my arms—his offer here I take ;
 Or if ye, singly, shrink the lists to try—
 Come more—your force united I defy— 540
 Whate'er the odds, this sword yon knight shall prove,
 A recreant to his lord and country's love.

He ceas'd : Rogero from the emperor's side
 Arose, and thus, with leave of Charles, reply'd ;
 That

That he, or any tongue that durst defame 545

His deeds, and brand him with a traitor's name,

Most foully ly'd—that to his sovereign just,

None rightly could arraign his breach of trust ;

And that he stood prepar'd his truth to prove

In loyal duty, and a subject's love : 550

Nor needed others here his cause befriend ;

His own right hand suffic'd him to defend

His name traduc'd, and well he deem'd it such,

The foe perchance might find that one too much.

Upstart'd then Rinaldo, Brava's knight *, 555

The marquis †, with the brethren ‡, black and white ;

Marphisa, Dudon—these whom friendship draws

To engage the Pagan in Rogero's cause ;

These seven united plead, that he whose hand

So late was knit in Hymen's holy band, 560

Should at his nuptial feast from quarrels cease,

Nor stain with sanguine war the rites of peace.

No more—no more—(Rogero thus replies)

Think not such reasons can for me suffice.

Then swift those arms are brought, which late in fight

He conquer'd from the stern Tartarian knight. 566

* ORLANDO. † OLIVERO.

‡ GRYPHON and AQUILANT.

Charles

Charles girds his trusty falchion to his side ;
 By great Orlando's hand his spurs are ty'd :
 Marphisa and his Bradamant invest
 With plate and mail his limbs and manly breast : 570
 Astolpho brings his horse of generous breed :
 The Dane's brave son * beside the ready steed
 His stirrup holds : Rinaldo, and the care
 Of Namus, for the knights the field prepare ;
 With these the marquis Olivero join'd : : 575 }
 Now here, now there, they drive the vulgar kind
 From the proud lists for deeds of arms assign'd. }

The dames and damsels, struck with panic fear,
 With features pale, like frighted doves appear,
 That driven by threaten'd tempest from the plain, 580
 Quit for their dear-lov'd nests the springing grain,
 When hollow winds are heard, when lightnings fly,
 When thunders rumble from the darken'd sky,
 Presaging on the delug'd fields to pour,
 From low-hung clouds the hail or rattling shower. 585
 Each female for Rogero felt alarms,
 Oppos'd to such a dreadful foe in arms,
 So fear the vulgar herd—while many a knight,
 And many a baron, seem'd to doubt the fight :

* DUDON.

Those deeds were present yet to every thought, 590
Deeds which in Paris' walls the Pagan wrought,
When he, with single arm, by sword and fire
Such ruin spread, and made whole hosts retire.

The heart of Bradamant, above the rest,
With all love's terrors heav'd her gentle breast : 595
Not that she deem'd, how'er for prowess held,
The Saracen Rogero's force excell'd,
Or thought that Rodomont must surely claim
The meed that crowns in arms the victor's name.
Yet could she not her busy doubts remove, 600
Such doubts as ever spring in those that love.

O ! with what rapture would she prove her might

In all the dangers of this untry'd fight !

Though more than certain fate had there design'd
Her life's sad period—her unconquer'd mind 605
Had dar'd for one a thousand deaths to face,
(Could death so oft be met by human race)

Rather than see the lord of all her vows

A life, far dearer than her own, expose.

But since she knew no prayer would bend her knight
To yield to her the perils of the fight, 611

A sad spectatress, with dejected look,

She sat, while frequent sighs her bosom shook,

Meanwhile Rogero there, the Pagan here,
 Against each other rush with ready spear : 615
 Without effect, though faithful to its aim,
 The Pagan lance against the buckler came,
 But snapt against that orb, which Vulcan fram'd
 For Hector's use—his point Rogero aim'd
 With better force, that 'midst the hostile shield 620
 Through steel and bone its furious passage held.
 That thrust had to the fight a period given,
 But short the weapon broke, and swift to Heaven
 The splinters flew ; while, stagger'd with the course,
 Back on his crupper fell each warrior-horse. 625
 Full soon with spur and rein each fearless knight
 His steed recover'd to pursue the fight.
 Their useless spears dismiss, their swords they drew,
 And wheel'd their steeds, while round their heads they
 threw
 The flashing steel, and now with pointed blade 630
 On plate and mail the weakest part essay'd.
 No serpent skin then arm'd the Pagan's breast,
 That hide which once the hostile stroke repress'd :
 Nor Nimrod's dreadful sword that day he wore,
 Nor on his brows the wonted helmet bore : 635
 For when along the bridge the tilt was run,
 And Bradamant from him the conquest won,

His arms against the sacred shrine the plac'd,
A mournful trophy of his deeds disgrac'd.

When Rodomont in many a place had view'd 640
His own bright mail with purple gore bedew'd,
He rag'd—he foam'd—not with such fury raves
The stormy sea, when black with wintry waves :
His buckler cast aside, his sword he drove,
With either hand, resistless from above, 645
On good Rogero's crest—so from the sky
Some ponderous weight, by leavers rais'd on high,
Falls thundering down—with every nerve the foe
Full on Rogero dealt the staggering blow ;
And ere his scatter'd sense the youth recalls, 650
From the stern foe the stroke repeated falls ;
A third succeeds—but soon, the blade unfit,
With such fierce strokes, th' enchanted casque to meet,
In shivers breaks, its master's aim deceives,
And in his grasp the broken weapon leaves. 655
Still Rodomont, with fury unrestrain'd,
Rogero press'd, who senseless yet remain'd ;
Him soon the Saracen from sleep awoke,
With nervous arms he clasp'd his neck, and shook
The gallant youth, till from his seat he drew, 660
And to the ground the struggling warrior threw :

Scarce had he fall'n, when swift from earth he sprung
With anger deep, with shame yet deeper stung:

For, as on Bradamant he cast his eyes,

He saw pale terror o'er her features rise: 665

She view'd, and trembling view'd, her dearest knight
Hurl'd from his seat; and, sickening at the sight,
Her tender soul seem'd ready wing'd for flight. }

Rogero, who to heal his shame prepar'd,
His falchion brandish'd, and the Pagan dar'd 670

To new assault—the Pagan spurs his steed
To o'erwhelm the knight; the knight with skilful heed
Eludes the shock, and in his hand restrains

The hostile courser by the straiten'd reins:

He whirls him round, and stands with point addrest 675

To pierce the mailed side or plated breast:

With two deep wounds he galls his thigh and side;

And fast from either flows the crimson tide.

Rogero, who the fair advantage knew,

Had seiz'd his arm, and now with force he drew 680

The furious king, and bending to and fro,

Compell'd at length his saddle to forego.

He fell—but whether by his force or skill,

So fell, he seem'd Rogero's equal still,

Alighting on his feet—but all the field 685

That saw Rogero yet his weapon wield,

High hopes conceiv'd—meanwhile with every slight
 The youth essay'd to keep the Pagan knight
 At distant bay, nor close too near with one
 Of such huge limb, strong nerve, and giant bone. 690
 Still in his grasp the furious Pagan held
 The broken weapon; this with force impell'd,
 He threw—the weapon sent with certain aim
 Against Rogero's helm and shoulder came.
 So dreadful was the stroke, the gentle knight 695 }
 Reel'd here and there, and scarce his utmost might
 Suffic'd to keep his tottering bulk upright. }
 To close in nearer strife the Pagan try'd:
 His wounded thigh his hasty step deny'd;
 And while he urg'd his feeble nerves in vain, 700
 One knee, beneath him bending, touch'd the plain,
 His time Rogero took, he press'd the foe,
 He whirl'd his falchion round, with blow on blow, }
 And laid once more the haughty Pagan low. }
 Again more fierce he rose; and now they join'd; 705
 They grasp'd, with arms around each other twin'd.
 Rogero well his pliant limbs could wield,
 And long had practis'd in the wrestlers' field.
 But Rodomont, with rage and shame impell'd,
 By turns Rogero's neck and shoulders held, 710

Now

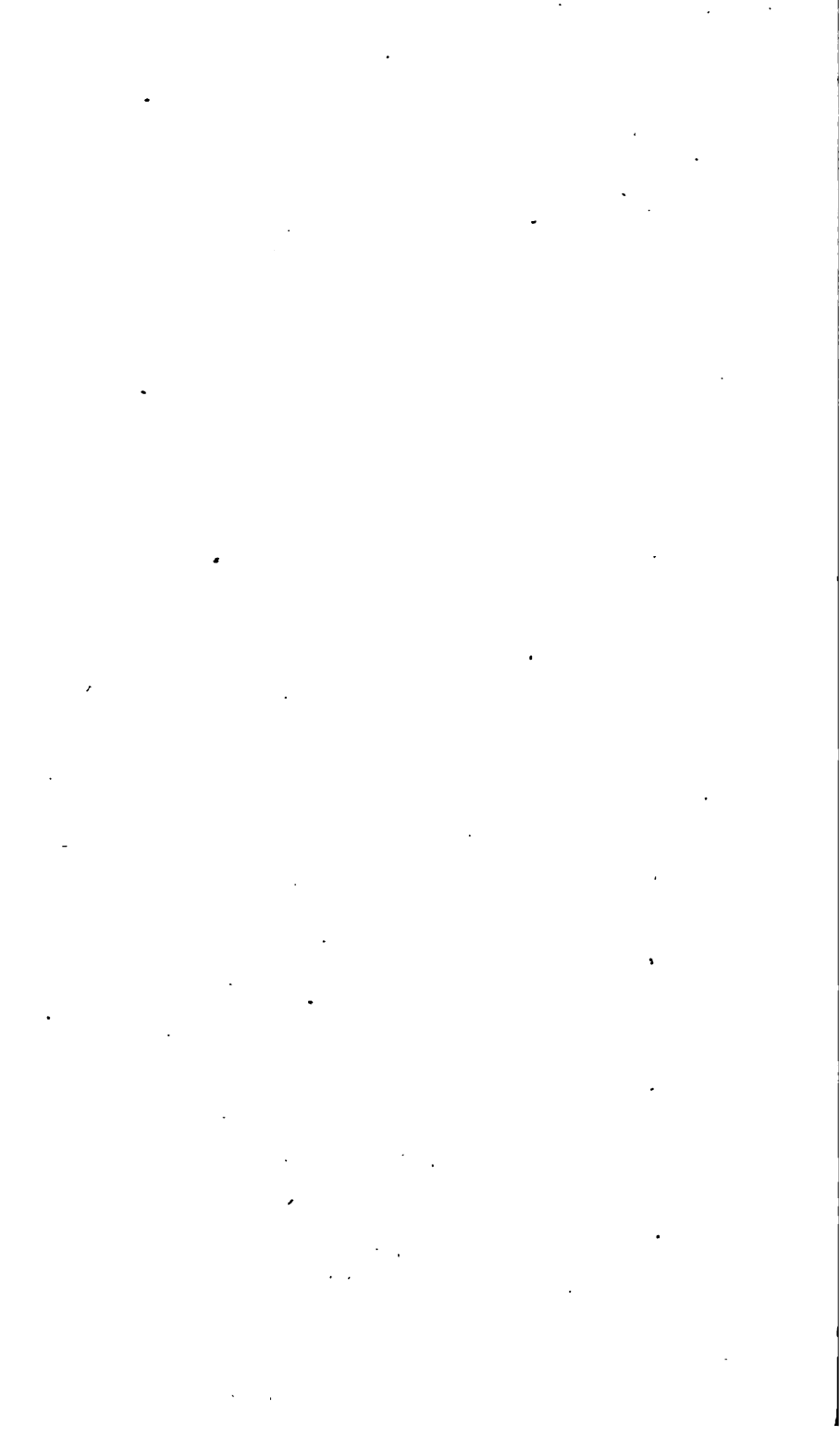
Now forward drew, now backward thrust, and press'd
 The youthful hero to his cruel breast,
 And lifted high—now here, now there, he strain'd
 The dauntless knight, and still his hold retain'd.
 While every means he tries on earth to throw 715
 The Christian youth ; no less his gallant foe,
 Collected in himself, his art and might
 Employs to disappoint the Pagan knight.
 At length fierce Rodomont his waist enclos'd
 With firmest grasp—now, breast to breast oppos'd, 720
 They toil—they pant—Rogero chief apply'd
 His art against the Pagan's wounded side :
 Athwart his bending knee one foot he thrust,
 And, lifting, hurl'd him prostrate on the dust
 Headlong—when thus the furious Pagan fell 725
 On the hard earth, the blood, as from a well,
 Stream'd from each wound, and deep on every side
 The fatal plain with gory crimson dy'd.
 Rogero now, with Fortune's favour crown'd,
 To keep the Pagan prisoner on the ground, 730
 One hand the dagger to his sight address'd,
 One hand with fearful grasp his throat compress'd,
 With either knee upon his heaving breast. }
 As in Pannonian or Iberian gloom,
 Where wretched miners cheerless days consume 735

For shining ore, if fate above impends,
And sudden ruin on their head descends,
Crush'd up and bruis'd, their spirits scarcely find
A vent to leave the mortal part behind:
So lay the Sarzan prince, so press'd beneath 740
His victor, struggled in the jaws of death.
The dagger, now unsheath'd, Rogero shook,
And at his vizor seem'd to aim the stroke:
He bade him yield, as vanquish'd in the strife,
With plighted faith to spare his forfeit life: 745
But he, whom thought of death far less dismay'd
Than aught that signs of dastard fear betray'd,
Still bent and twin'd; while all in vain he prov'd
Against the knight, who kept his place unmov'd.
As when the mastiff, panting on the plain, 750
Whose throat the nimble greyhound's fangs constrain
With deadly gripe, in fruitless fury lies,
With jaws dire foaming, and with fiery eyes;
Not all his force the victor can elude,
By skill and vigour not by rage subdu'd: 755
So Rodomont essay'd each art to make
The conquering youth his powerful hold forsake.
He strove to rise; but still the wary knight
Press'd him to earth with unabated might.

Now,

Now, writhing here and there, the Pagan strain'd 760
Each nerve, and freed at length his better hand,
That in its grasp th' insidious ponyard bore ;
(The ponyard from the sheath releas'd before)
With this he sought to aim the murderous wound
Beneath Rogero's reins—the youth renown'd 765
The danger saw, should still his generous heart
Defer the Pagan's death, his just desert.
Then at full stretch he rais'd his arm above
The furious king, and thrice the weapon drove
Deep in his gasping throat—so ends the strife, 770
And leaves secur'd Rogero's fame and life.
Where Acheron's infernal waters spread,
Freed from her icy limbs, blaspheming fled
Th' indignant soul, that here with impious pride
All human faith, and Heaven's own laws defy'd. 775

END OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH AND LAST BOOK.



I N D E X

TO THE SECOND VOLUME,

The Letters denote the Book, the Figures the Verse.

A

AGRAMANT defeats Charles, and again lays siege to Paris, xiii. 640. Endeavours to compose the quarrels of his camp. Contrives lots to decide the order of combat, 728. Offended with Marphisa, 962. Refers the dispute between Mandricardo and Rodomont to Doralis, 1003.

— honours Rogero after his combat with Mandricardo, xiv. 579. Is assailed in the night by Rinaldo with great slaughter, 900. Retires to Arli with Rogero wounded, 956.

— his distress. Orders Brunello to be hanged, xv. 90.

— from the walls of Arli sees Bradamant unhorse three of his knights, xvi. 264.

— calls his council. His speech xviii. 420. Sends an embassy to Charles to decide their quarrel by two champions, 581.

— breaks the truce, xix. 25. Defeated, and sets sail for Africa, 647. Is met by Dudon's fleet: most of his vessels destroyed, 748. He escapes with Sobrino, 808. Lands in an island, Meets Gradasso, 873. With Gradasso, and Sobrino, challenges to fight Orlando and two other knights, 949.

Agramant, his conversation with Brandimart the night before the battle, xx. 482. His death, 793.

Alardo sets out with his brothers to the relief of Charles, xiv. 665. Unhorsed by Guido Savage, 691. Present at the attack of the Pagan camp, 909, 926.

Alceste, the lover of Lydia, dies through her ingratitude, xvii. 426 to 579.

Aldiger declines Marphisa's challenge, xiii. 9. Defeats with his companions the troops of Bertolagi and the Moors 45. Unhorsed and wounded by Mandricardo, 248.

Aleria, wife to Guido, is with Guido when he meets Rinaldo and his kinsmen, xiv. 675.

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